COMFORTABLE [illegible]

To

Afflicted Conscientes

Together with a Short Ad[illegible]
to Ministers how to handle the[illegible]

And also,

MANSIO CHRISTIANA

Or the

Christians Mansion-H[illegible]

Being a

SERMON

Preached on the Lord[illegible]
Anno Dom. 1668. at the Funer[illegible]
of Mrs. *MARTHA WALMISLE[illegible]*
the Wife of Mr. *Charles Walmisley*,
Minister of *Chesham magna* in
the County of *Bucks*.

By *WILLIAM JO[illegible]*
Minister of *Sarrett* in the County of [illegible]

London, Printed by *John Winter* [illegible]
[illegible], at the Sign of S. [illegible]
Little Britain. [illegible]

Stephen Lyle his Book

Bo:t of Rob:t Tucker

March ye 23^d 1733-4

l. c. 1°

Stephen Lyle

His Book 1734

Afflicted Consciences

My gett Releife

If thy apply to Christ

as Cheife

To the READER.

IF the matter be ſound and ſeaſonable, reſt contented, and look not for any Rhetorical expreſſions: Theſe Sermons would gladly ſtoop to the weakeſt capacities; we like the Receipt if it be proper for the Diſtemper,

ſtemper, fainting Spirits will find but cold comfort from ſtrong Lines and elegancy of Phraſes; afflicted Conſciences can gather but little ſweetneſs from the Flowers of Rhetorick; the virtue of a Cordial doth not lie in the cup in which it is preſented, but in the goodneſs of the Ingredients; we value the Meat more than the Garniſhes about the Diſh; if the Meat be ſavory, do not ſleight it becauſe it is not ſerved up in a ſilver Diſh; And beware that you do not ſay as ſome are apt to ſay, (at this day the world even ſurfeits by Books of this nature) We think there is ſafety in the

multitude of Counsellors for our Politick and Civil State. How numberless are the Books and Receipts, yea, the Physitians for our bodies grown, yet who says (we have too many?) and yet so foolish are we to think, that in the distempers and unsettled cases of our Souls, we may have too many Books, too many Counsellors, too many Physitians, too many Directions. I will add but this: Oft times a poor countrey Physitian does good, where many great Doctors, either overlook or neglect.

As a Woman that was in a despairing condition, propos'd

the

the doubts, and gave the first occasion of Preaching this matter; so the desire of some other Women hath now occasioned the Printing it, and for their sakes I have purposely avoided any Phrases that might seem dark or difficult; Let not the whole despise that which is prepared for the sick, nor let the strong censure what was intended for the weak.

Vale.

Psalm 88. Ver. 6.

Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in Darkness, in the Deeps.

His Psalm fully answers the Title given to it; (a Psalm containing a grievous Complaint) but the occasion of it is doubtful: Some refer it to the *Babylonish* Captivity, because that is the lowest condition that the Church can be brought unto in this world, and so Figuratively may be called *the lowest Pit*; but others more properly make it relate only to *Heman*'s own private condition.

the doubts, and gave the first occasion of Preaching this matter; so the desire of some other Women hath now occasioned the Printing it, and for their sakes I have purposely avoided any Phrases that might seem dark or difficult; Let not the whole despise that which is prepared for the sick, nor let the strong censure what was intended for the weak.

Vale.

[illegible] 1691 Book

PSALM

Psalm 88. Ver. 6.

Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in Darkness, in the Deeps.

THis Psalm fully answers the Title given to it, (a Psalm containing a grievous Complaint) but the occasion of it is doubtful: Some refer it to the *Babylonish* Captivity, because that is the lowest condition that the Church can be brought unto in this world, and so Figuratively may be called *the lowest Pit*, but others more properly make it relate only to *Heman*'s own private condition:

Some expound it of his outward afflictions, or of some sharp fit of sickness that brought him nigh to Death, which occasioned those expressions, *My life draweth nigh to the Grave, I am as a man that hath no strength.* Ver. 3,4.

But methinks there are many expressions that must rather be interpreted of a wounded Spirit lying under the apprehensions of Gods wrath.

Surely if there had been nothing but outward afflictions, we should not have heard such deep expressions of inward sorrow, the complaint would not have been so mournful as now it is; And therefore I rather accept of their Interpretation, who understand the 5. *Ver.* to be the words of one that is ready to despair; (free among the dead) as if he should say, the Die is cast as to my Eternal estate, there is no hope of Mercy for me, and then this Text doth second it, (*Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in Darkness,*

in

in the Deeps) namely as to mine own sense and apprehension. I look upon my condition as desperate, as one that is condemned to eternal darkness, as if my name were entred among that cursed crue already, as if I were ready to drop into that deep and bottomless pit of darkness; and so the 7th. Ver. seems to bear the same part. *Thy wrath lyeth hard upon me.* I am under such dreadful apprehensions of wrath, and have so little hope of mercy, that I look on my self as only not in Hell, and also the 15th. Ver. *while I suffer thy Terrors I am distracted.* He doth not mean a distraction of madness, but a distraction of the mind, of one that was in doubt what would become of his Soul for ever: I am hampered in such endless doubting that I am even like a distracted person: For division of the words here is, 1. an Act, *Laid.* 2. the Subject, *Me.* 3. the Agent, *Thou.* Lastly, the place

where,

where. *In the loweſt Pit, in the Darkneſs, in the Deeps.*

Note by the way, that *Heman* was one of the holyeſt and wiſeſt men of his time: And now the Doctrine I ſhall offer is this; *That the deareſt of Gods Children may think themſelves in a ſtate of Damnation.* *David* is a full inſtance to confirm this Doctrine, 51 *Pſal.* 11, 12. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me, reſtore unto me the joy of thy Salvation.* *David* had loſt the comfortable ſenſe and feeling of Gods love, and began highly to queſtion his Salvation, *Aſaph* alſo, 77 *Pſalm* 7, 8, 9. ſhews what a great conflict he had with diffidence. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender Mercies?* And ſo *Heman* here in the Text; *Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt Pit,* &c.

1. Becauſe

1. Becauſe the Spirit of Bondage always goes before the Spirit of Adoption; God doth break and bruiſe the Souls of his Servants, before he doth bind up and heal them; He makes the Sinner to hear the terrible voice of the Law, before he hears the comfortable voice of the Goſpel; He throughly convinceth us of Sin, and makes us ſenſible of the odious and defiling nature of it, before he makes us apprehend Chriſt as a Saviour to procure us a pardon for it; God makes us ſee and feel our ſelves loſt, utterly loſt, even in a ſtate of Damnation, before he give us any lively hope of Salvation.

All that are brought into Heaven at laſt, are brought near Hell-gates at firſt; I do not mean all univerſally, but generally, the greateſt part of thoſe that are ſaved, apprehend themſelves for a time to be damned; the Spirit of Bondage worketh fear and horror,

horror. A malefactor, whose Conscience within, and the Witnesses without, convince of Murder, when he hears the Sentence passed against him, and sees the Fetters on his legs, and himself thrust into the Dungeon, he knows that Execution follows; what fear and horror must needs seize on such a condemned person, (unless he be a desperate Rogue?)

That poor Soul that is convinced of Murdering the Lord of Life, and of many thousand Sins against God, and heareth his Sentence of condemna ion read out of the word of God, and sees the Fetters on its Soul, (namely the terror of Conscience,) and Satan standing ready to torment him, & finds himself already in danger of despair, what fear and horror must needs surprize such a poor Soul? this is that which makes so many under the Spirit of Bondage, to fear that God will cast them off for ever, and to complain

as

as though they were in Hell already.

And questionless, the great torment and misery of a wounded Spirit hath been the reason that made any so bold to say, *That there is no Hell but that of Conscience.* The Apostles words *Rom.* 8. 15. *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, do imply, that all the Elect undergo the terrors of the Spirit of Bondage, before they receive the Spirit of Adoption.

2 Reason is, because God may, and often doth leave his Children for some time, under Spiritual desertion.

Many pretious Servants of God lie in the Little-ease of an afflicted Conscience a great while; If Christ complain as if God had forsaken Him, it is no wonder to hear a Christian complain of being forsaken. It is reported of one who lay in a despairing condition 12 years; and some think that *Heman* lay in that comfortless condition above threescore years, guessing

guessing from the age of his life when he spake those words, *Ver.* 15. *From my youth up while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.* The Lord may forsake his Children for a little moment, (and though it be as long as they live, yet it is but a moment compared with Eternity) but Reprobates are forsaken for ever.

3. A Child of God may relapse into some Sin which he had repented of, and that may cause terror of Conscience; God Redeemed, and brought up *Israel* out of *Egypt*, but they would go back into *Egypt* again, *Num.* 14. *ver.* 4. and this foolish attempt caused God to forsake them for a long time. Christ hath Redeemed us from Sin; and though the Christian have repented of Sin, yet many times he hath thoughts of going back, and sometimes doth relapse into some Sin formerly repented of; And it is just with God to fright him out of such wicked

attempt

attempt by the terrors of Conſcience; If God ſhoot terrours into the Soul, they will ſtick faſt, and make us go heavily, if God ſet our ſins in order before us, He can make the ſenſe of Sin to be more painful then the moſt acute diſeaſe, whether Stone or Strangury: Wracks and Strapadoes are but eaſie puniſhments to the wracking of Conſcience; to ſet out the miſery of ſuch a condition, the Scripture tells us, *The Spirit of a man may bear his infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* 18 *Prov.* 14. The courage and ſtrength of body may wreſtle with a Diſeaſe, but the trouble of mind is inſuperable and inſupportable; the grief of the Soul, is the Soul of grief. If we ſee the fits of an Ague ſo eaſily maſter the greateſt Spirits, and make them quiver and quake in a cold fit, and burn and be diſtempered in a hot fit, if a Diſeaſe can ſo puniſh the Body, then what terrours can the Almightie

mighty dart into the Soul, even to make our very knees to ſhake as *Belſhazzar's* did when he ſaw the Hand-writing againſt him; and for the ſame reaſons which occaſioned his trembling, namely, becauſe it was a hand from God; and becauſe the writings mentioned the loſs of his Kingdom. A wounded Conſcience is the more filled with horror, becauſe the writing is from God, and it doth threaten the loſs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What Conſternation was there, what ſad thoughts, during the time of that devouring Fire in *London*? O then, when the Soul looks on God as a conſuming fire, and thinks it ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings, what horror and diſquiet muſt it needs be ſeized with?

Uſually God dealeth with obſtinate Sinners, as Men deal with ſturdy Rogues, (put heavier Irons upon them)

them, and give them ſeverer puniſh-ment) the more we load our Conſci-ences with Sin, the more God loads us with terrors of Conſcience, and ſo gives us ſour ſauce for the ſeeming ſweet-meats of Sin; If we have been great and notorious ſinners, God may chaſtiſe us with Scorpions. *Manaſſeh* was a great ſinner, and it is ſaid (*he was taken among the Thorns, and bound in Fetters*, in the 2 *Chron.* 33. *chap.* 11. *Ver.* The more we have delighted in any ſin, the more it will torment conſcience when God reckoneth with us for it: *Paul* a refractory Perſecu-tor, was ſtrucken to the ground when God converted him.

4. Reaſon why a child of God may think himſelf damned for a time, is, becauſe the wiſdom of God brings much good out of this evil; this will make us more highly to prize both our Redeemer and our Redemption too: How ſweet and comfortable is

the sight of a Pardon to a condemned person? How precious is a glimpse of Christ's love in any promise to a sinner condemned in his own Conscience? How comfortable is the thought of Christ to Justifie, unto those Souls that are ready to be swallowed up of Despair? what love, what thankfulness will such a sight beget in such a Soul? How thankful were the famishing *Egyptians* to *Joseph* 47 *Gen.* 25. *Thou hast saved our Lives* (though they exchanged their Land for Bread,) Then what thanks is due to Jesus Christ who saveth our Souls freely?

2. This good ariseth from this evil of an afflicted Conscience, that it will mightily increase our hatred of Sin; This is one of Gods great designs in breaking our bones for sin, that he may break our Souls from sin; Invite a Christian that hath lain long in the stocks of the Law, to commit any

of

of his former sins, will he not answer, (I will not buy Repentance at so dear a rate?) had your Soul been so long broken on the wheel of Conscience as mine hath been, had you so long carried in your bosom the burning coals of an accusing Conscience; had you been thus scorched with the flames of Hell, surely, like the burnt Child you would dread the fire more, you would not dare to add sin to sin, and heap up more wrath.

3. We are made to Pray more earnestly; the Prisoner at the Bar begs heartily because he is begging for life; A self-condemned sinner prayes heartily, because he is begging for the life of his soul.

4. The terrors of Conscience will make us more humble and compassionate all our days, pride will not so easily breed in this bitter wood, the Worm takes the sweetest wood soonest, the Wormwood of Conscience kills pride.

5. Gods breaking and bruising is in order to a perfect cure.

The last reason why a child of God may think himself damned: it may arise either from a neglect of a serious examination of our condition, or from a melancholy temper which contributes very much to such despairing thoughts.

Who hath not either read or heard what strange conceits melancholy hath caused some to have of their bodies: some fancying themselves to be a Fourm, and that every one would sit on them; others thinking themselves to be a Glass, and that every thing would break them; or to be like *Nebuchadnezzar*, to have the Soul of a Beast, and to eat grass like a Beast, (which some say was but a strange effect of a strong melancholy,) even such strange apprehensions may melancholy christians have of their Souls, insomuch that many christians have

have thought themselves to be in Hell, and for a long time have led most uncomfortable lives by that fearful expectation of of wrath and fiery indignation to devour them.

Application is, 1. For Information, We must not censure those too hardly that lie under a Spirit of Bondage; those are not damned that may think themselves in a damned state, the new birth hath grievous pangs and throes; those whose sin is ever before their faces, must needs cry out of a heavy burthen of wrath.

Before this Spirit of Bondage, we are like *Issachar*, who is called a *strong Ass couching under two Burthens*, Gen. 49. *Ver.* 14.

We have a burthen of guilt, and a burthen of wrath, and yet we are not sensible of either; but the Spirit of Bondage shews the intolerable burthen of sin.

That I may endeavour to speak something to afflicted Consciences,

Although you say a Spirit of Bondage is a woful condition, yet I assure you your condition was much worse before you came under this Spirit of Bondage.

To be hardned in Sin, is a worse condition, then to be thus harrased by Conscience for Sin; to be bold to commit sin, is far worse then to be bruised for sin committed: you are in a great deal worse condition then all Hypocrites that go quietly to Hell; How many thousand in the world that are guilty of the same sins you complain of, and yet are senseless as stones? It is good to hear christians roar in the sense of sin: to hear a man that is bruised with a fal sensibly complain, and tell where his pain lies, is a good sign that there is hopes of his recovery: It is the same in a Christian, to complain of sin, and cry out

in

in the fear of that wrath due to sin, is a good sign that Conscience is alive, that Conscience is awake.

A seared Conscience is far worse than an afflicted Conscience; a senseless condition is the very worst condition: if you rightly consider, you have cause to bless God for a Spirit of Bondage, that while many millions are riding Post to Hell, God hath stopt you that were running the same Road; Remember therefore for your comfort, that many have been lead to the place of Execution, and have stood with the rope about their necks, having the sentence of death in themselves, and yet have been pardoned after so great a fright; Many christians are dealt with after the same manner; God may leave them a long while in the Jaylors custody, in fear of eternal Execution, (I mean buffeted by Satan under temptations to despair) and yet God may come in

with a Pardon at last, only he intends to fright us from sin by this means for the future. I have heard of one whose friends had got him a Pardon, and yet suffered him to be lead to the place of Execution, to make him be more afraid of lewd courses for the future: There may be a Pardon for us in Gods hand, and yet it may not so presently be given into our hand; Nay, if you have been very long under a Spirit of Bondage, though God give a Pardon into your hand, yet you may not be able to read it, (being under the dread of Execution) Many now living besides me, may remember a man in *Oxford*, that was to draw Lots for his life, and he drew that paper wherein was writt (*Live*,) but he was so possess'd by fear of death, that he threw it away, supposing that he was to die, until some that stood nigh him read his Lott, and told him that was to live; so it may fare

fare with an afflicted Conſcience, God may write (*Live*,) and yet the fear of Hell may ſo far ſtupify the Soul, that it may not be able to read the writing; In caſe of temptation it is ſafeſt to let ſome other Chriſtian read the writing for us, to let other Chriſtians judge of our condition.

Remember therefore, that you were under Satans Bondage, before you were under the Spirit of Bondage; it is much better to be Gods Priſoner, than Satans, a man hardned in ſin, is a Priſoner without hope; but a man bruiſed for Sin, is a Priſoner of hope; and though this terrifying work of a troubled Conſcience be not Grace, yet it is in order unto Grace, all thoſe terrours that do not end in final deſpair, are ſtill in order to Converſion, and the deeper God cutts and launces the Soul, the ſooner it will be healed again.

It is a great comfort to a Patient to hear that there is good hopes of his recovery, although he be ſtill kept in the Chirurgeons hands, or though they tell him it will be a very long cure, the hope of cure revives him, although he may endure much miſery before the cure be perfected; It is a great comfort to a Travailer to hear that he is in his right way, although he may paſs through many dirty lanes and rugged paths, and perhaps may be ſet upon by Robbers: although the way be tedious and dangerous, yet this bears him up, it is the right way, and will bring him to his journeys end at laſt.

Although the way which the Spirit uſeth, ſeem a tedious and unpleaſant way, yet it is the right way to Heaven; and though you may think you are kept long in a courſe of Spiritual Phyſick, yet the hope of a perfect cure at laſt, may keep you from deſpair.

And

And here it will be needful to answer some Objections which troubled Consciences make.

Alas you speak all this while to a wrong party: I have no Grace, and therefore there is no hope for me.

Answer, 1. It is a happy turn that you see the want of Grace. 2. It is well that you are made desirous to have Grace; these are good steps towards Grace.

Answer, 2. To have Grace is one thing, and to know that we have Grace is another; that *Joseph* liveth is one thing, and that *Jacob* knows that *Joseph* liveth, is quite another thing, for *Jacob* thought he had been torn in pieces by some wilde beast, and made a solemn mourning for him, *Gen.* 34. *Ver.* 34, 35. In the obscurity of a winters night all the Wares remain in the Shop, but we see them not except we have a Candle, or tarry till day appear again; There may be Grace

Grace in the heart and we not discern it; commonly those that say they have no Grace, have more Grace then those that so confidently proclaim themselves to be Citizens of Heaven.

2 *Objection.* But can such a wretch as I expect Grace, that have spent so many years in sinful courses, and have sinned so desperately as I have done?

Answer. God saith, *That if we condemn our selves here, we shall not be condemned hereafter,* 1 *Cor.* 11. *chap.* 31. *ver.* Pre-judging of thy self is a good sign that God is fitting thee for mercy. Although such is the froward disposition of men, that repeated affronts breed an irreconcileable alienation in our hearts; Yet so infinitely is Gods mercy, that he called upon *Judah* to return to him, after he had played the Harlot with many lovers, *Jerem.* 3. *ver.* 1. And in the 12 *ver.* God bids backsliding *Israel* to return,

and

and in the 55 *Isai. ver.* 7. God promiseth *mercy to the wicked and unrighteous man*; And because the poor self-condemning sinner says he hath abundance of sin, therefore God says that *he will abundantly pardon*, not only those that are sinners in their own reckoning, but even those whose lewd lives have deserved the name of wicked and unrighteous; yet let them return to me says God and they shall be pardoned; no matter how desperate we think our condition to be, if Christ undertake the cure, if he be our Physitian.

Nay, if we believe that Christ is now in Heaven, who had the sins of all the world laid on his back when he was on Earth, we may the more easily believe Gods readiness to pardon the greatest sinner, and also Christs merit to be able to answer for the greatest sins.

A 3 *Objection.* But Faith and Repentance are the conditions of Pardon; but I cannot believe, nor repent, and *he that believeth not is condemned already, John* 3. *ver.* 18.

Anſ. That Scripture ſpeaks of a final unbelief, he that dies in unbelief; To be earneſt with God for Faith, is a ſign of ſome Faith; that man, *Mark* 9. *ver.* 24. *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief.* He did not ſay, I can, or I cannot believe, but Lord I deſire to believe, and I believe that thou canſt help my unbelief: Our Saviour ſeems to ſay unto troubled Conſciences, as he ſaid to the blind man, *Matt.* 9. *ver.* 28. *Do ye believe that I am able to do this? and they ſaid, yea Lord*, then ſays Chriſt, *according to your Faith be it unto you*; here was Faith enough to fit them for a cure.

And for Repentance, Chriſt is exalted to give Repentance, and Remiſſion of ſins, *Acts* 5. *ver.* 31. Since

you

you know that you cannot believe, nor Repent, pray unto Christ, and He will enable you: *Peter* denyed his Master thrice, and yet Christ looked back upon him, and recovered him again; Let the greatest sinners look unto him, and they shall be pardoned.

Take heed of *Cain's* unbelief, *My sin is greater than I can bear*; Or as the Note in the Margent of the Bible, *is greater than may be forgiven*: He did not say so, because it was so; but it proved to be so, because he said so: Unbelief makes sin unpardonable.

No sin can damn the Soul, if final Unbelief be not added to it; And this made St. *Austin* say, *Thou liest* Cain, *for the Mercy of God is far greater than the greatest sin.*

You say you do not repent; Pray tell me, is sin your solace, or your sorrow? doth it make you merry, or doth

doth it make you mourn? do you love Sin, or do you loath Sin? is it that evil which you allow, or that evil which you allow not? *Paul* was a true Penitent even when he complained of a *Body of Sin, a Law in his Members, which made him do the evil which he hated, Rom. 7. ver.* 15.--19. compared, it shews you do repent; Seeing that God hath made you so sensibly to bewail your impenitency; Therefore look unto Christ whom the Father hath exalted to give Repentance, and Remission of sins, *Acts* 5. *ver.* 31.

Alas! I cannot weep for my sins as I ought: outward sufferings fetch more tears from my eyes, then my sins; How bitterly did *Peter* weep upon the remembrance of his denyal? How plentifully did *Mary Magdalen* shed tears when we washed our Saviours Feet with them? but alas I can scarce weep at all.

Answer.

Answer.

Abundance of tears do not always declare true Repentance; We read of *Esau*'s Tears, but not of his Repentance. *Gen.* 27. *ver.* 34. --- 38. *He cryed with an exceeding bitter cry; He lift up his voice and wept.*

Tears seem to us to be all of a colour, God only can put the difference; *Esau*'s tears, and *Peter*'s, both wept bitterly, and yet both of them wept savingly.

There may be true repentance without a flood of tears; the Thief on the Cross was truly penitent, and yet we do not read of a tear that dropt from his eyes: *David* truly repented, and yet we find no mention of any tears when *Nathan* told him of his sins, 2. *Sam. chap.* 12. *ver.* 13.

Mr. *Perkins* in his *Cases of Conscience* hath abundantly satisfyed us, that tears are not absolutely necessary to true Repentance; some are naturally

more

more dry of conſtitution, and barren of Tears than others. I knew a Boy that was not able to ſhed a tear to ſave a whipping : True Repentance is to be judged of, more by the inward ſorrow of the heart, then by the outward ſorrow that runs down the cheeks; the greater the inward grief is, the fewer tears will fall; as a high wind keeps back the ſhowers off, the great combuſtion in the ſoul may keep back the ſhowers of tears; And ſo there may be true Repentance with drie cheeks.

There is great weeping and wailing in Hell, but no true Repentance.

Children are more eaſie to ſhed tears than grown men; Sighs and groans is the uſual way of expreſſing the greateſt ſorrow.

And whereas you ſay you cannot weep ſo much for ſins as for outward ſufferings : for ought that we can find, *Hezekiah* wept more at the meſ-

ſage

ſage of Death, than when he humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart. *Iſai.* 38. *ver.* 14.

David's ſickneſs drew more tears from him than his Sins, *Pſal.* 2. *ver.* 5, 6. What bitter lamentation did he make when he received the unwelcome tidings of *Abſalom's* death? 2. *Kings chap.* 18. laſt *ver.* and 19. *chap.* 4. *ver.*

Thoſe things that moſt preſs the outward ſenſes, do ſqueeze out moſt tears: To ſee our Houſe on fire, would more eaſily force tears from our eyes, than to hear a Sermon of the fire of Hell, although that be much more dreadful news.

To conclude this particular, A malefactor that is condemned to the Gallows, may ſhed more tears than one that is pardoned; and yet he that is pardoned may be more penitent than he that is executed.

It is dangerous to make any ſtandard to meaſure true Repentance; for if you will ſet any, it muſt be the higheſt of all: ſo that unleſs you are ſure that you weep as bitterly as *Peter*, or *Mary Magdalen*, the Devil will ſtill tell you it is not true Repentance: beſides it looks ſo like a Papiſtical trick (as if you thought that rivers of tears could waſh away ſin without the blood of Chriſt:) And when we have wept until we can weep no more, if Faith be not mixed with our Tears, it is but legal Repentance.

Alaſs! But I have committed foul facts ſince my firſt converſion.

Anſwer.

So did both *David* and *Peter*, and how did they recover themſelves but by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and Repentance

tance from dead works; Therefore confeſs your ſins to God, and think of that comfortable portion of Scripture, 1. Epiſtle *John* 2. *chap. ver.* 1. *If any man ſin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*: It is not ſaid, If any man ſin not, but *if any man ſin*; Thus poor ſinners go loaded to Heaven with abundance of experience of the riches of Gods Grace, and freeneſs of his Mercy in pardoning their heinous tranſgreſſions.

There are commonly Three hindrances in the way of afflicted Conſciences.

1. Looking only upon Sin.

2. A proud kind of ſeeming Humility.

3. A ſearching for the fruits of Repentance, before we are ſure of Faith.

1. Many

1. Many look only upon their Sins, and not to their Saviour.

Alaſs ſayes the afflicted Conſcience, my Sins are crying Sins, Crimſon Sins, Scarlet Sins, Scandalous Sins, foul, frequent, committed againſt much Light, much Love, againſt much Means, much Mercy: If a wounded Man ſhould only look upon the bleeding wound, would it not make him faint for fear that he ſhould bleed to death; But when he ſeeth the skilful Chirurgeon about to dreſs it, and conſiders his skill to cure it, this upholds his ſinking Spirits; even ſo poor Sinners muſt needs faint, and deſpair of Pardon, while they look no further than their Sins, which deſpairing thoughts would ſoon vaniſh, if then we could look

look up to our Saviour, are not all ſins eaſie to be pardoned by Infinite mercy.

It was an excellent anſwer that one returned the Devil, when he told him of the heinouſneſs of his ſins, *thy ſins ſhould be pardoned too, if thou couldſt believe.*

Chriſt can more eaſily pardon ſeventy offences to us, then we can ſeven to one another; He delighteth to forgive much, ſo to engage us to love him much. When ſome told the Ruler that his Daughter was dead, and bid him not trouble the Maſter, *Mark* 5. *ver.* 35, 36. Chriſt bids him *fear not, only believe*; and ſo to that other perſon, *Mark* 9. *ver.* 23. *If thou canſt believe*, all things are poſſible to him that believeth.

When *Martha* ſaid, *by this time he ſtinketh, for he hath been dead four days, Joh.* 11. *ver.* 39, 40. Chriſt checks her, *ſaid I not unto thee, that if thou wouldſt*

 believ

believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the Glory of God?

Theſe were all deſperate caſes, and therefore the more proper for Chriſt the Great Phyſitian.

Chriſt can cure inveterate Ulcers, aſwel as green wounds; therefore look up to Chriſt, while you look down upon your ſins; ſee what power Chriſt hath to ſave, while you behold what power ſin hath to damn; that ſo while you ſee in your ſelves great cauſe of deſpair, you may ſee in Him far greater cauſe of hope.

2. Hindrance to afflicted Conſciences, is, a proud humility, or a kind of ſeeming mannerlyneſs; It may be like *Peter*, thou thinkſt it not good manners to let Chriſt waſh thy Feet, *John* 13. *ver.* 8. *Thou ſhalt never waſh my Feet*; *Calvin*'s note on thoſe words is, *Pride often lurketh under pretence of humility*; away with this deſtructive manners, ſeeing that the great work which God requireth of us, is, to believe in Chriſt as our Saviour, and

to believe that He both can and will ſave us to the uttermoſt, ſurely we cannot do it too ſoon.

3 Hindrance. It may be that thou ſearcheſt for the ripe fruits of Repentance, before thou art ſure that thou haſt Faith; in the work of our ſpiritual ingrafting into Chriſt, we are like crab-ſtocks newly grafted, which do not inſtantly bear fruit the ſame day, or week, or the ſame month that they are grafted; If we be truly ingrafted into Chriſt by Faith, Repentance, and the fruits of it will appear afterwards, but not the ſame hour that we are ingrafted, (I mean not ſo as to be diſcerned by us) look after Faith firſt, before you ſearch after Repentance; Faith will help us to repent: *Paul* did not bid the Jailor to repent, but believe firſt, *Acts* 16. *ver.* 30, 31. He knew that Faith would work Repentance; If the Devil tell you (*that you ſhould have repented ſooner*)

er) Remember that true Repentance can never be too late, Christ dyed before you sinned; If therefore you believe in Christ now, you shall be as surely pardoned as if you had begun your repentance sooner: Repent, for your deferring repentance so long, and remember that the repenting Thief was not rejected, though it were at the last hour.

4. Objection. But I am so continually haunted with temptations, either to Blasphemy, or Self-murther, or one black and deviliſh temptation or other, that sleeping or waking I am a terror to my self.

Anſ. So were all true Saints more or less haunted with the like temptations, that have lain longer under a Spirit of Bondage: This may be a good sign that we have not given Satan a peaceable possession, when he thus strives to make a forcible entry by such horrid temptations.

The

The Devil lets them alone of whom he thinks he hath made sure work, but he assaults those most with the greatest temptations, that are striving to get out of his clutches.

5. *Object.* But alass, I have something that tells me, I have withstood my day of Grace:

Answer. That something must be either from God, or Satan: It cannot be from God, for He tells none, that they shall die in their sins, but such as obstinately reject Jesus Christ, and refuse to be saved by him; Indeed Christ said to the *Pharisees, I go away, but ye shall die in your sins, Joh.* 8. *ver.* 21. But if you take notice of it, 'twas spoken to them that blasphemed Christ, and said, *He had a Devil. John* 17. *ver.* 20.

This may be a comfortable note; Christ said to the Penitent Adulterer, *John* 8. *ver.* 11. *neither do I condemn thee*; And yet he said to the self-

juſtifying Phariſees, *Ye ſhall die in your ſins.* That ſinner that confeſſeth and bewaileth his guiltineſs, him Chriſt abſolveth; but that Soul that thinks it ſelf Righteous without Chriſts Righteouſneſs, He abhorreth.

If ſin be your burden, Chriſt calls you to Him; and therefore this ſomething that tells you you are damned, muſt be from Satan that old lyer.

You may know the Devil to be a lyer in this, as well as in other things; for God never made Satan of his Privie Council, to know who are to be ſaved, and who are to be damned; But pray tell me,

Suppoſe the Devil ſhould tell you that you ſhould be ſaved, would you believe him then?

Why then do you heed him now, that he ſayes you ſhall be damned? as you would miſtruſt your condition more, if Satan ſhould tell you that you ſhould be ſaved; ſo now you have

cauſe

cauſe to miſtruſt it leſs, becauſe he tels you you that you ſhalbe damned; If the Devil ſhould poſſibly know that you ſhould be damned, for certain he would never tell you ſo, for fear of awaking your Conſcience, and makeing you look after Salvation; If Jeſus Chriſt do not tell us that we are damned, we need not regard what Satan ſays, for whatever he ſaith, he is a lyer.

This is not the firſt lie Satan hath told in this kind, many are now ſaved in Heaven, whom the Devil told they ſhould be damned: You may read two remarkable ſtories in Mr. *Clark's* deſcription of the Lives of Mr. *Balſom*, and Mr. *Rothwel*; and becauſe the latter ſtory is appoſite to this purpoſe, I have tranſcribed it; The perſon that was poſſeſſed, his name was *John Fox*: The Devil ſpake thus to Mr. *Rothwel*; *Say nothing to me of this man for he is damned*: *Mr.* Rothwel an-

ſwers, *thou art the Father of lies, nor art thou ſo well acquainted with Gods mind concerning this man, which makes thee thus torment him; therefore I believe thee not, I believe he ſhall be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt.*

The Devil replyed, *He is a Murderer, and thou knoweſt no Murderer muſt enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Mr. Rothwel. *Thou lyeſt again, for* David *was a Murderer, and yet is in Heaven; and the Jews with wicked hands crucified the Lord of Glory, yet, both Chriſt prayed to his Father to forgive them; and* Peter *exhorts them to repent, that their ſins might be blotted out.*

Devil. *But this man hath not, cannot, ſhall not repent.*

Mr. Rothw. *If he had not, thou wouldſt not have told him ſo; but if he have not, I believe God will give him repentance, and thou ſhalt not be able to hinder it.*

6. Objection.

6 *Object.* But you know there is a ſin unto death, a ſin that ſhall never be pardoned, and I fear I have committed that ſin.

Anſwer. I am glad you fear it, for it is ſo much the more likely that you have not ſinned that ſin: Indeed Satan doth much perplex troubled Conſciences with the fear of ſinning the unpardonable ſin; yea, I am perſwaded, that moſt of the Elect, if not all, are afraid they have, or ſhall commit that ſin.

Troubled Souls are to be diſſwaded from muſing ſo much on that nice Subject.

No man can poſitively determine what the unpardonable ſin is, and of all men you are the moſt unfit to ſearch it out.

7 and laſt *Objection.* Alaſs, I have lain ſo long in this deſpairing condition, that I doubt I ſhall never get out of it.

Anſwer.

Answer. Many were under bodily distempers, and yet were healed at last.

When ever Christ commeth, He brings a cure with him: We read of a Man that was impotent 38 years, *John* 5. *ver.* 5, 6, 7. and yet Christ healed him.

The Woman that was bowed together by an evil Spirit 18 years, and yet Christ loosed her from her infirmity; and that which is a comfortable word for thee to consider, Christ calls her a daughter of *Abraham*, although she was possessed by a Devil, *Luke* 13. *ver.* 16. The continuance of your temptation doth not hinder you from being a daughter of *Abraham*.

That I may draw towards a conclusion; If you consider what hateful sins you have committed, and how long you have lived in sin without any sorrow for sin, you need not wonder that God sends you so long a time of sorrow now.

Absalom

Absalom was greatly beloved of *David*, and yet when he had murthered *Amnon*, he was banished three years from *Jerusalem*; and when *David* recalled him from banishment, yet for two years more he saw not the Kings face, 2. *Sam. chap.* 13. *ver. ult.* and compare it with *chapter* 14. *verse* 28. *David* suffered him to dwell in his Kingdom, but did not presently admit him to his Court, to shew his just displeasure against his abominable murder.

God may bring a sinner home by converting Grace, and yet not make him or her sensible that they are received into favour by comforting Grace. God doth not welcom home all his Prodigals with Musick and Feasting; some one he may to declare his Mercy, but not all, to shew his just abhorrence of our Prodigality.

The blessed Spirit is first a Refiner, before it prove to be our Comforter;

He

He is a ſanctifying Spirit before he prove a witneſſing Spirit, He purgeth away our Sin, before he ſhew us our Pardon; the Holy-Ghoſt firſt cleanſeth us, then comforteth us; He firſt removes our ſins, before he remove our ſorrows: The Apoſtle ſpeaks of thoſe that had received the Spirit of Adoption, when he ſaid, *The Spirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our Spirit*, in 8 *Rom.* 15, 16.

God may make us his children, and yet may not inſtantly dandle us on his knee.

To ſhut up this matter:

It is ſaid, that *Iſrael* in *Egypt* did not hearken to the promiſe of Deliverance, by reaſon of their anguiſh of Spirit, occaſioned by their cruel Bondage, a very remarkable Scripture. 6. *Exod.* 6, 7. But though *Moſes* ſpake to them from God, yet they hearkened not to the Promiſe, for anguiſh of Spirit, and for cruel Bondage: The paralel

paralel is eaſie, lying long under a Spirit of Bondage may make us deaf for a while to all the Promiſes of Pardoning Mercy, and free Grace.

Now let me perſwade you to read the Promiſes more often, and more more ſeriouſly, ſtudy the nature of free Grace more, Pray more, although Satan tell you you are unfit to Pray; For if the thoughts of our unfitneſs can drive us from Prayer, he will always ſuggeſt that we are unfit, ſo to make us ſtill more unfit by our own neglect; the more unfit we are to pray, the more need we have to uſe the words of that Diſciple in *Luke* 11. *ver.* 1. *Lord teach us to Pray*, &c. The more we ſee our unfitneſs to Pray, the more need we have to preſs God to make good that gracious Promiſe in *Rom.* 8. *ver.* 26. *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities*, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, *but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſsion for us*, &c.

Some

Some advice is needful to Miniſters, how to handle tender Conſciences, and that follows in the ſhort Notes of the next Sermon.

Neceſſary

Neceſſary Advice to Miniſters how to handle AFLICTED CONSCIENCES.

Ann Red

Benj Wheeler his Booke
Ano: 1678

John Starr
Ano 1691

Luke 4. *Ver.* 18.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel to the poor; He hath ſent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind; to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed.

THeſe words are our Saviours firſt Text which he taught upon in *Nazareth*, as you may ſee *ver.* 16: God the Holy Spirit directed Chriſt to that Text of Scripture, which might mind him of his Office, and prove moſt comfortable to poor ſinners.

These words are taken out of the 16 of *Isaiah*, being very little altered, that being the Prophecie of what Christ now began to perform.

For Division,

1. Here is something affirmed; *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*

2. A reason assigned; *because he hath annointed me to preach the Gospel*, &c.

3. Some particular duties of Christs Office repeated, *to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to to the Captives, to preach recovering of sight to the blind, to preach liberty to them that are bruised.*

For Explication.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Christians receive a measure of the Graces and gifts of the Spirit, but Christ received the Spirit without measure, *John* 3. *ver.* 34.

Several Saints are more eminent in several Gifts and Graces; *Moses* had the

the ſpirit of Meekneſs and Miracles; All the Judges of *Iſrael* had the gift of Government and Fortitude; *Solomon* had the Spirit of Wiſdom, the Prophets had the Spirits of Prophecy, the Apoſtles had the gift of Tongues, and Interpretation of Goſpel Myſteries, But in Jeſus Chriſt the fulneſs of all Graces and Guifts do meet as in their proper Center: A chriſtian may be ſaid to be rich in Grace and Gifts, but Chriſt only is full, He hath all fulneſs.

Becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel. Here Chriſt ſhews the world his lawful Commiſſion: Be aſhamed all ye that climb up into the Miniſtry by any other way, then of lawful Ordination; Chriſt ſhews his Orders from Heaven, and mark it; our Saviour doth not ſay, *becauſe the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore he hath ſent me*; *but becauſe he hath ſent me, therefore the Spirit is upon me.*

God bestows a measure of Gifts upon every one whom he sends into the Ministry, but he doth not send every one into the Ministry upon whom he bestows a measure of Gifts; Gifts without Ordination, is no lawful Commission.

To preach the Gospel to the poor. This tells for what end Christ received the Gifts of the Spirit, to make him an able Preacher of the Gospel.

To preach the Gospel. *Moses* was sent to preach the Law, but Christ is sent to preach the Gospel; *Moses* the servant of God, handed the Law to *Israel* after the Flesh: Christ the only begotten Son of God, handed the Gospel unto the spiritual seed; We have lost nothing (but time) by coming last into Gods Church, they were before us Gentiles in time, but we are before them in priviledges.

To preach the Gospel to the poor. That is to say, *to the poor in Spirit*, such as

as ſee and acknowledge their want of Righteouſneſs; thoſe that are ſenſible that they have provoked God, but they have nothing whereby to appeaſe his wraath, and need Chriſt to ſtand their friend, to make peace between God and them.

To heal the broken hearted. That is, ſuch whoſe conſciences are terrifyed and tormented with the guilt of Sin; according to the Greek word, it is, *thoſe whoſe hearts are cut aſunder*, meaning with the ſenſe of ſin, and ſorrow for ſin, God hath ſent me to purify and paçify ſuch accuſing conſciences.

To preach deliverance to the Captives. He meaneth not thoſe whom men have enſlaved to their power, but thoſe that ſee themſelves in ſpiritual ſlavery to ſin and Satan.

And recovering of ſight to the blind. Chriſt is the light of the world, He is the *day Star from on high that viſiteth us who are walking in darkneſs.*

The world without Christ was a dark Dungeon; The Heathens were like the Sodomites when the Angel had struck them with blindness: It is said that they *wearied themselves to find the dore. Gen. 19. ver. 11.* Christ is called in Scripture: *the dore of Salvation*: the blind-folded Heathens wearied themselves in vain to find this dore.

To set at liberty them that are bruised. Those may be said to be bruised, that are struggling with sin, but cannot overcome sin, but get many falls by which their Souls are sorely bruised, and their consciences full of pain and torment; so that by all these expressions we are taught what the Gospel offereth to us; Namely, Christ offereth us his hand to pull us out of the lowest pit of sin, and out of the dark Dungeon of Ignorance, to give liberty and spiritual freedom to us that are oppressed with all kinds of miseries, that we that are poor may be enriched with

with his Grace, that we that are blind may be enlightned by the light of his Gospel; that we who by nature are Satans bond-slaves, may be made free, and set at liberty by him.

And as the Father sent Christ on this errand, so Christ sends his Ministers on the same errand: You see therefore what kind of People you have to deal with, such as are spiritually poor, broken hearted, blind, Captives, and bruised.

The Doctrine I shall name is this. *That Christ hath an especial eye to those that are afflicted in Conscience*; And the Reasons may be such as these.

1. The reason in the Text, because it is his Office to take care of such, God hath sent him for that end and purpose.

2 Reason is, the helplesness of such poor sinners, they can do nothing but weep and complain, sigh and mourn, and disquiet themselves more

at the apprehenſion of their miſery; but do not know what to do to eaſe their conſciences; therefore the merciful nature of Chriſt makes him have a tender eye towards ſuch.

3 Reaſon. Becauſe ſuch are prepared for Chriſt to deal with, ſuch are prepared to welcom the Goſpel: Chriſt preacht to the Scribes and Phariſees, but they thought themſelves to be whole and needed not a Phyſitian, and therefore deſpiſed his help: but when he preached to the Publicans and Sinners, they followed him; He preached to that *Mary* noted as a ſinner, and ſhe followed him weeping. *Luke 7. ver. 37. All the Publicans and Sinners drew nigh to hear.* Luk. 15. *ver.* 1. Whereupon the Phariſes murmured, which gave an occaſion to thoſe Parables in that chapter, of the loſt Sheep, the loſt Groat, and the loſt Son.

Chriſt

Christ is sent to save those that see their lost condition without him, and such only will bid welcom to the Gospel.

4 Reason why Christ hath such an eye to afflicted consciences, is, Because Satan is so busy with them, he seeks to drive them to final despair of mercy, and to suggest thoughts of Self-murther: Therefore as the Devil hath an evil eye towards them to destroy them, Christ hath an eye of pitie and compassion towards them, to deliver them, and to preach Salvation to them, if Satan desire to winnow *Peter*, Christ will take the greatest care of him; if Satan tempt *Peter* to denie his Master, Christ will look back upon him to reclaim him again: Now this is a pattern for Christ's Ministers to imitate; have an especial eye to the sin-sick Souls, the broken hearted. In the close of the former Sermon I hinted that some Advice

was needful unto Miniſters how to deal with afflicted conſciences, I reſerved it unto this place, where I might preſent them with ſuch a bleſſed pattern to follow. Afflicted conſciences during the time of temptation, they are like blind men, therefore deal with them as ſuch, lay no ſtumbling blocks before them, make your Doctrine plain and obvious, be you inſtead of eyes unto them, perform the office of a good guide, and lead them to Chriſt, and to the Covenant of Grace, and to the Promiſes; they are broken and bruiſed already, therefore deal gently with them, handle their Souls with ſmooth, and not with rugged hands.

We ſay a Chirurgeon needs an Eagles eye, a Lyons heart, and a Ladies hand: ſo we may ſay of a Miniſter, he needs an Eagles eye, to be of a piercing ſight in the Myſteries of the Goſpel; He needs a Lyons heart, having

having to do with wounded and Ulcerous Souls; He needs a Ladies hand, having to do with broken hearted ſinners. Afflicted conſciences are thirſty, and ready to faint; therefore lead them to the Rock Jeſus Chriſt, from whoſe ſide (being ſtruck by the rod of God,) do only flow thoſe waters that can allay the ſcorching heat of an inflamed Conſcience, and can refreſh and revive the drooping Soul that boweth under his burthen of temptations; hence do iſſue thoſe waters that can cleanſe the Conſcience, and waſh away the guilt of ſin, which makes it ſo diſquiet and tormenting: after *David* had ſinned fouly, by Adultery and Murder, he came to theſe waters, *Pſalm* 51. *ver.* 2. *Waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin.*

Moſes's rod ſtruck the Rock, that water might guſh out to the thirſty *Iſraelites*; God's rod ſtruck the Rock

Jeſus

Jesus Christ, that Mercy might flow out more freely to the thirsty sinner; If they be thirsty, lead them to Christ *the Fountain of living waters.*

A wounded Spirit is shot with a poysoned arrow, (I mean the sting of sin) be you therefore that loving friend that may draw out the venome with your mouths, (I mean, by your godly council and seasonable advice.)

Do not tell afflicted Consciences of a God only, but of a God reconciled in Christ: put them into the clift of this Rock Jesus Christ, when you shew them any thing of the Glory of God.

They are bruised, therefore speak not all Law unto them, but mingle Gospel with it, least you break those whom God hath bruised.

Shew them the cleansing and comforting Blood of Jesus Christ; and if their trembling Souls chance to propose any such Questions as are in the

6 *Micah* 7. *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams?* Shew them the *Lamb of God that taketh away the ſins of the world.*

While they cry out of their own ſinfulneſs, ſet before them Chriſt's perfect Righteouſneſs, and that He freely offers to cloath them with it; ſhew them not only Chriſts ability to ſave, but Chriſts willingneſs to ſave; for that is ſound advice given by a late writer; *That Soul which is diſquieted for ſin, muſt be pacifyed by ſomething that is not ſin: He that is ſenſible of his own unrighteouſneſs, muſt be made to ſee a perfect righteouſneſs ſomewhere elſe, even the righteouſneſs of Chriſt*: If it were a prevailing argument with God, *Exod.* 32. *ver.* 13. *To preſs him to pardon* Iſrael *for the ſake of* Abraham, Iſaack, *and* Jacob *his Servants, and his Covenant made with them.* Then ſurely it muſt needs be a ſtronger argument, when a poor ſinner ſhall be

ſeech

ſeech God to remember Jeſus Chriſt his only begotten and well-beloved Son that dyed for him, and his Covenant made with Chriſt: But as afflicted conſciences will be much fingering their ſore, and ſo put back their cure. The ſight of Sin is a thick cloud, which will much hinder the ſight of a Saviour; Therefore when they complain of great and manifold offences, do you ſhew them Gods great and manifold Mercies, *Pſalm* 51. *ver* 1. Shew them *Davids* argument, *Pſalm* 25. *ver.* 11. *O Lord pardon mine Iniquity for it is great.* Here is our uſual Objection turned into an Argument; *My Sins are great, therefore I fear God will not pardon them*, ſays the doubting ſinner; *My Iniquity is great, therefore Lord pardon it*, ſays the believing *David*; even mercileſs men will do much to purchaſe them a great name; the merciful God by pardoning great ſinners, gets Himſelf a greater

er name of being Merciful; Shew them how to frame an argument out of Gods own words, *Jer.* 33. *ver.* 8, 9. *And I will cleanse them from all their Iniquities whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me, and it shall be to me a name of joy, a Praise and an Honour before all the Nations of the Earth which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.* Press the Lord with His own words, to exalt His great name by cleansing and pardoning thy sins; and the more and the greater they are, the more will His Mercy be glorifyed: Seeing God desigueth to be glorifyed in the great Attribute of his Mercy, we cannot glorifie it more, than by throwing our selves upon it.

If Satan aggravate our Sins, (as he never fails to do it to the purpose, when he finds a sinner despairing,) then we must set all the true colours upon Mercy, great Mercy, glorious

Mercy,

Mercy, rich Mercy, abundant Mercy; and that which is beyond all that Satan can say of our sins (Infinite Mercy) Shew them therefore, that by casting our Souls upon Gods free Mercy, we do exceedingly glorifie the Mercy of our God, and the merit of our Redeemer.

Do not rob God of the glory of his Mercy by your unbelief.

But if the broken hearted sinner yet object against it self; Alas my sins are no ordinary sins, then do you put them in mind, that Christ is no ordinary person, His blood is no ordinary price, His Redemption no ordinary work, and Gods Mercy in Christ is no ordinary matter.

Paul did not despair of Pardon because he saw himself to be chief of sinners, 1 *Tim.* 1 *ch.* *ver.* 15. but gloried so much the more in Christs coming to save such as he was: A Soul that is once enabled to look upon Christ as his

his Saviour, will not deſpair though Conſcience tell him he is a great ſinner, but can be as willing to accuſe it ſelf as Satan is to accuſe it, and yet not deſpair of pardon, but imploy Satans malice as an argument for greater love to Jeſus Chriſt: Thoſe that deſpair of Mercy, ſhould be much preſſed with the great injury done to Gods Infinite Mercy, and to Chriſts Infinite Merit by ſuch as deſpair of Pardon; for it is as much as to make God an unmerciful God, and Chriſt to be an Impotent Saviour: and it is a moſt dangerous ſin in reſpect of us, for it blocks up the way to Mercy; all other ſins might be pardoned, if unbelief did not intercept our Pardon, in the 3 *Jo. ver.* 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* It is not ſaid, becauſe he was a Whore-monger, or a Thief, or a Drunkard, but becauſe *he believeth*

not in the name of Christ; So that unbelief is the greatest sin of all other.

Satan holdeth many under despairing thoughts a long time, by telling them that they have not been broken enough yet by the terrors of the Law, and therefore are unfit for pardoning mercy yet.

Pray is not this a strange reasoning, as if you should say to a sick man, you seek to be cured too soon? your case must be more desperate, before you go to a Physician.

Doth not Reason tell us, that in a dangerous wound, the sooner we look for a Chyrurgeon the better, and that we cannot go too soon? The longer we defer seeking unto Christ, and laying on the Sovereign Plaister of his Blood, we must needs be the longer before we can be healed.

If any violent distemper seise on your Bodies, you are ready to ask one another, *why do not you go forth and*

seek

seek help? delays are dangerous in this case. Now then ask your Souls the same question, seeing sin hath made such a dangerous wound in thy conscience, *why do not you go forth, why do not you seek after Jesus Christ?* Delays are dangerous in this case I am sure.

If Faith be the condition of the the new Covenant, we cannot believe too soon; urge those that yield to despairing thoughts with those words of Reverend Dr. *Sibbs*: Judas *did far worse in despairing of Pardon, than in denying of Christ; In the latter indeed he destroyed Christ's humane nature, but by despair he denyed his Divine nature.*

Who doubts but if *Cain* had not despaired, he might have been pardoned.

Will you flie from Christ because you are sinners? will the sick man shun the company of the Physician because he is sick?

The Phariſees upbraided Chriſt, that he was a friend to Publicans and Sinners, *Matt.* 11. *ver.* 19. to teach thee that he is no enemy to the vileſt ſinner that cometh to Him for mercy. Afflicted conſciences are weak ſighted; or like the Diſciples, *their eyes are held*, *Luk.* 24. *ver.* 16. *Chriſt is near them, but they ſee him not.*

Therefore let all Miniſters, and alſo all good Chriſtians endeavour to help that defect, by leading them unto Chriſt, and opening the Promiſes of the Goſpel unto them; end ſince they feel the ſting of the fiery Serpent in their Souls, ſhew them their Saviour, who is the truth of the brazen Serpent; help them to lean upon Chriſt that tryed Stone, ſo called *Iſa.* 28. *ver.* 16. Chriſt is a tryed Stone indeed, whom neither the weight of the ſins of the whole world, nor the malice of all the Devils in Hell, nor the rage of his perſecutors on Earth, nor the

weight

weight of Gods wrath due for the ſins of mankind, (which was much heavier than all the former) could once make to yield at all, or to fly out of its proper place; and therefore Chriſt is only fit to be the chief corner ſtone. He is the only immovable Foundation, able to bear up the whole building of his Church; And whoſoever builds his Soul upon this Foundation, (Jeſus Chriſt) the Gates of Hell ſhall not be able finally to prevail againſt him.

Such as are afraid to fall, lead them to Chriſt that Rock of ages, that they may ſee themſelves placed in a ſafe condition; and do you carry thoſe young Lambs that cannot go: I have not written this as though I were able to adviſe my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, but to move them to conſider the caſe of afflicted conſciences, that they may labour more to heal the broken hearted, and to ſet at li-

berty

berty them that are bruised, that the people may have greater cause to say, *How beautiful are the Feet of those that bring glad tidings of Salvation?*

Benjamin Wheeler
[illegible] 1682
[illegible]

marcy

MANSIO CHRISTIANA,
Or the
Christians Mansion-House.

Being a

SERMON

Preached on the Lords-Day, 7th. *Feb.* *Anno Dom.* 1668. at the Funeral of Mrs. *MARTHA WALMISLEY* the Wife of Mr. *Charles Walmisley.* Minister of *Chesham magna* in the County of *Bucks.*

By *WILLIAM FOLE.*
Minister of *Sarrett* in the County of *Hertford.*

2 Ephesians 6.
And hath made us sit together in Heavenly Places.

London, Printed for *Samuel Homes,* at the Sign of S. *Paul* in *Little Britain.*
Anno Dom. 1671.

Frames Co y^o Hors

To his Reverend Brother in the Goſpel Mr. Charles Walmiſley, *Husband of Mrs.* Martha Walmiſley *Deceaſed, Grace and Peace.*

Worthy Sir,

THat which is reported of *Egeſias* the Philoſopher, that he could ſo accurately decipher the miſeries & wretchedneſs of Life, as to make Men out of love with it, and ſo colour over the grim face of

Death, as to make it deſirable; that is only really performed by this Text: A little Rhetorick may ſerve to perſwade a poor man to forſake his thatch'd Cottage, if you can aſſure him that by ſo doing, he ſhall have a better habitation: The moſt effectual way to make a Chriſtian to deſpiſe Life, and deſire Death, is, to preſent him with a ſight of his Heavenly Manſion, and then with S. *Paul*, He can groan earneſtly to leave this earthly Tabernacle, when he knows he hath a building of God, a Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; for though nature abhor

abhor a diſſolution, yet it covets happineſs; ſo that Reaſon it ſelf may well aſſent to the deſire of being diſſolved; when Faith hath rightly informed it that it is far better; for it is wiſdom to admit a change, when we are ſure it ſhall be for our greater advantage.

Sir, if you thus look on Death (though as a dark entry) yet as the ready paſſage to our Heavenly Manſions, then I ſhall need to ſay no more, either to quiet your Spirit concerning the Death of your dear Wife, at whoſe Funeral this Sermon was Preached, or to make you more

willing to entertain more familiar thoughts of your own diſſolution; If it be far better to be with Chriſt, than to linger ſtill on Earth, then what remains? but that we patiently bear the departure of our deareſt Friends and neareſt Relations, and cheerfully expect our own; that we may be ſo far from fearing death, as rather to welcom it: who baulks a friends Invitation, becauſe he imployes a Blackamore to be the Meſſenger? What though Chriſt ſend his *Negro* (Death?) ſeeing it is to invite us to a Feaſt with him in his Kingdom; We know Chriſt is

our

our beſt Friend, and though at firſt we may ſtartle at the Meſſenger, yet the very Meſſage ſhews that Death be-friends us too; If God make this Sermon uſeful to be your remembrancer in theſe great duties, let him have all the Praiſe whi[illegible]ou receive the profit.

Your affectionate Brother in the Goſpel of our bleſſed Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt.

VV. J.

John 14. Ver. 2.

In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

IN occasions of great sorrow a single advice may not be sufficient to quiet and compose our afflicted Minds; Christ had advised his Disciples in the former Verse not to be troubled at his absence, which

which he backs with a ſtrong Reaſon in this Verſe; *I go to prepare a place for you*: Conſider the end of my departure, and you have no more reaſon to be troubled at it, than you have, if a friend that hath invited you to a Feaſt, ſhould ſay, I muſt go home before you to ſee all things ſet in a readineſs for your Entertainment: So great [illegible]ky is there for my leaving [illegible]; *Chriſtus non abit nos deſerere ſed ut lautiſſimum convivium nobis præparet.* Chriſt doth not mean to leave us, but He goes to make proviſion for us.

Chriſt ſeeing them troubled, ſeemed to neglect himſelf, that He might hearten them againſt the fear of his Crucifixion.

It is not unlikely, but that the minds of the Diſciples might be filled with ſuch troubleſome thoughts as theſe; Alaſs! in what hole ſhall we hide our heads from a malitious Devil and

a perſecuting World, now that our Champion is taken from us? Where can We be ſecure if He ſuffer? Can We think to eſcape, if He be put to Death? What Croſſes muſt we look for, if Innocency it ſelf be Crucified? If they deal thus barbarouſly with our Lord, what will they do, or what will they not do rather againſt his Servants when He is gone?

What will become of us when the light of our eyes is departed? yea, the very breath of our Noſtrils? If the Shepheard be ſmitten, what will become of the timorous Sheep?

Againſt all theſe carnal fears Chriſt oppoſeth a greater cauſe of Hope; Againſt all this matter of trouble, He ſeaſonably oppoſeth a ſurer cauſe of Spiritual Joy & Tranquility of mind. Bear my abſence patiently, for it ſhall redound to your eternal advantage; *I go to prepare a place for you.* This Text will not admit of ſuch a Methodical Diviſion,

Division, as other Texts of Scripture do.

The first words are Christs Consolatory Reason, why the Disciples should not be troubled at his absence: *In my Fathers House are many Mansions.* The former words may be added to confirm that assertion, *If it were not so I would have told you*; and that you may be sure it is so, *I go to prepare a place for you.* In these word, is observable,

1. An Act, *Go.*
2. An Agent, *I go.*
3. An End, *To prepare a place.*

Lastly, The Person for whom, *For you.*

Explication, *In my Fathers house.*

Heaven is called Gods House; Because there God dwelleth, and there Saints and blessed Spirits shall dwell with God for ever: Christ calls it His Fathers House for our greater consolation, to shew us that He hath much

much power there, who is the only begotten Son and Heir of all things; He is the *Dominus Factotum*: Heaven is a place where I have Power to make you welcom, For it is my Fathers Houſe; No Son and Heir can have ſo much priviledge at home to bid his friends freely welcom, as I have to make you my friends welcom in my Fathers Houſe, *are many Manſions*: There are Manſions, not Tabernacles, to denote the unchangeableneſs of the condition of Saints in Heaven; here on Earth you can have but moveable Tents, but in Heaven you ſhall have a ſettled condition, a Manſion-houſe, even in our Engliſh phraſe, ſignifies that Houſe where we live moſt of our time: Great Men may have ſeveral Houſes, and yet but one of them is called their Manſion-houſe; that is to ſay, the place of their moſt conſtant abode, where they dwell the moſt part of the year; It is but a ſhort

time

time that we ſpend on Earth, but we ſhall dwell for ever in Heavenly Manſions. Chriſtians are here ſpoken of, as being Great Perſons (being made Honourable by Chriſt) who, though they may have Earthly Tabernacles, yet have but one Manſion-houſe, and that is Heaven.

Many Manſions; There is not only room for Me, but for all my Members alſo.

Though there may be ſo many thouſands of glorious Inhabitants in Heaven already, yet there is ſtill room for every Saint too.

In Scripture God is repreſented to us, as a great Houſholder, and the Saints are called Gods Houſhold or Family; Every wiſe man provides a Houſe according to the largeneſs of his Family: *Aretius* ſays, that the word Manſions, is a word of diminution, where little is ſpoken of the greateſt matter; as if we would call the vaſt Ocean, a great Pond. We

We muſt not imagine that Heaven is divided as the Earth is (into ſeveral Habitations) but Heaven is fitly called a Manſion, becauſe there is a fulneſs of glory and happineſs; however Men live in their flitting-houſes, as I may call them, where they ſtay but a night or two; yet in their Manſion-houſes they will fare plentifully, every Saint in Heaven ſhall have a fulneſs of Glory and happineſs.

2. In Heaven there is a permanencie, and therefore called a Manſion; for the Greek word μόναι, and the Latine word *Manſiones*, and the Engliſh word *Manſions*, do all imply the eternity of the Glory and happineſs in Heaven.

3. Heaven is called a Manſion-houſe, in reſpect of the different degrees of Glory in Heaven. In a Kings Court there are ſeveral Offices, but all are contented, for all are Courtiers, In Heaven, the Houſe is the ſame, and

the

the happineſs is the ſame; but there are different degrees of Glory: But the Saints in Heaven ſhall be as free from envy, as the Stars in the Firmament are: one Star differs from another in Glory, yet they do not quarrel about their different degrees of Light and Luſtre; no more ſhall the Saints in Gods Houſe: *If it were not ſo I would not have told you*; I would not delude you, or feed you with vain hopes, promiſing that which I cannot perform: When you come to Heaven you ſhall find much more than what you are able now to underſtand of the happineſs you ſhall inherit there. *I go to prepare a place for you*; The great end of Chriſts aſcending into Heaven, is to prepare a place for his Elect, to make way for their coming thither: take notice of our Saviours Conſolation, He doth not ſay, *Let not your hearts be troubled, for ere long I will make you earthly Princes, and make you*

great

tread on the necks of your enemies; But he gives them comfort of another kind, I am preparing Glory for you, *Let not your hearts be troubled*. When by my Death and Resurrection I have fitted all things for your entertainment, I will come again, and receive you unto my self.

It was the manner of Bride-grooms, when they had made all things ready, to come themselves, and fetch home their Brides to their Fathers houses: *I go to prepare*, and I will come again and fetch you unto my self. O the wonderful tenderness and infinite condescention of Divine Love! Christ will do all himself. He came once from Heaven already to make himself known unto us; but his love engageth him to make one journey more to fetch us, and take us up unto himself; then he came to prepare us for Heaven. He is now gone to prepare Heaven for us: *I go to prepare a place for you*. These

may allude to Travailers, (as *Musculus* notes) where many travail together in a company; they chooſe out ſome one to ride before, and provide Lodgings, and a Supper for them: Our Saviour attempereth his Speech to our underſtandings, the incomprehenſible things of Heaven are painted out in theſe humane colours, becauſe we are much taken with theſe things; and partly becauſe the Diſciples did yet dream that Chriſt would eſtabliſh a worldly Kingdom, and would have ruled ſome time as an Earthly Monarch; Chriſt therefore in a ſweet and friendly manner works them off from expecting any ſuch thing here, by telling them what he is going to prepare for hereafter: your expectations ſhall not be altogether diſappointed; you ſhall have honour and happineſs, but it ſhall be in a better place, in Heaven, for thither I go to prepare for you: the Providence of God ſent *Joſeph* ſecretly

cretly before-hand to provide a place for his unnatural Brethren; Christ the truth of *Joseph*, is gone into Heaven to prepare a place for all his Brethren, though by our sins we both sold him and crucified him, *Hebr.* 6. *v.* 20: Christ is called the Saints fore-runner, implying that the Saints shall follow him into heaven.

Before Christ ascended, he said, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, John* 17. *ver.* 24. Therefore he is gone before to prepare a place for them: Heaven is prepared already, but our Sins had shut it against us; Christ is gone to provide admission for us.

The Doctrine I shall offer, is,

That Christians must look on Heaven as their dwelling place.

Reasons of the Doctrine are,

1. Because God designeth heaven as our Dwelling-place: A Christian hath a Body and a Soul, an earthly

and an heavenly part: A Body formed of the Earth, and a Soul infused from heaven; This Earth was made for the delight of the Body, here is beauty to delight the Eye, and sweetness for the Taste, and variety to delight the outward Sences: But Heaven was made for the Soul; In the Body we resemble the Beasts on Earth, in the Soul we resemble the Angels in heaven; The Body is contented with the things of the Earth, and thinks it good to be here; but the Soul finds nothing able to satisfy it here on earth. And therefore is always mounting up to heaven by contemplation, and desirous to be dissolved from its earthly clay. God made Man looking upwards towards heaven, and the Beasts bowing downward towards the earth, to shew us that the Earth is the proper place for brute Beasts; but heaven is the place whither Man should aspire.

2. Reason

2 Reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould look on heaven as their Dwelling-place, lyeth in the Text; Becauſe Chriſt prepares it for them: and where can he better provide a place than in his and our Fathers houſe? *I aſſend to my Father and your Father*, Joh. 20. ver. 17. My Father by Nature, your Father by Grace, as S. *Auſtin* interprets it; Where can he better prepare a place for his Elect than in his own Kingdom? It's the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Pet. chap.* 1. *ver.* 11. Where can Chriſt better prepare a place for them, than in that Kingdom which God the Father hath freely beſtowed on them? *Luke* 12. *ver.* 32. *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Fathers good pleaſure to give you a Kingdom: fear not want or trouble here, but look on your ſelves as Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.* Where can he prepare a place better than in that Kingdom which Chriſt alſo ap-

pointeth for them? *Luk.* 22. *ver.* 29, 30. *And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my Table, and sit on Thrones judgeing the twelve Tribes of* Israel; And therefore you may be sure that this is meant of heaven: For here on Earth Saints do not sit on Thrones, but rather on Dunghils, as *Job* and *Lazarus* did; they do not Judge here, but rather are judged and hardly censured.

3 Reason why Christians must look on Heaven as their Dwelling-place, is, because the word of God directs us so to do; *To set our affection on things above, and to seek those things*: to look on the world but as our Inne; but on Heaven as our home.

4 Reason. Because experience doth shew, that on Earth Christians have no certain Dwelling-place, 1 *Cor.* 4. *ver.* 11. here we travail and meet with troubles; here we sojourne, here we suffer, here we have no continuing

City;

City, but we ſeek one to come, *Heb.* 13. *ver.* 14. Indeed neither Believer, nor Unbeliever have any ſettled condition on Earth; But it is more eſpecially appropriated to Believers.

1. Becauſe of the Worlds ill dealing with them; they are always driving them from Poſt to Pillar, as we ſay, from place to place; *Moſes* was much longer a ſtranger in *Madian*, then a Courtier in *Egypt*.

2. Becauſe Believers do look upon Earth as an uncertain place, where they cannot ſet up their reſt; they look on the world as a Camp, where they wall meet with oppoſition, rather then as a City where they ſhould expect ſafety and quiet. The Chriſtian expects his reſting place to be in that City which *Abraham* looked for, *Hebr.* 11. *v.* 10. *A City that hath Foundations, whoſe Builder & Maker is God.* All the Cities on Earth are ſo eaſily removed, as if they had no Founda-

tions, Heaven only is an immoveable City.

Last Reason why Christians must look upon Heaven as their dwelling place, is, to move them to a Heavenly Conversation; such as our hopes is, such will our Conversation be; if your hope be only in this life, then your trade and dealing, your thoughts and actions shall be to get worldly things, your Conversation will be earthly; the prevailing degree of love in all you do, will be for earthly things; or as the Scripture doth phrase it, *you will mind earthly things*, *Philip. 3. ver. 19.* All our aims, actions, and endeavours will be but to get Money, to buy Land, to build Houses, to settle your rest on Earth; your discourses will be about dividing the Inheritance like theirs, *Luk. 12. ver. 13.* or about making more room for your worldly store like the fool in the Gospel: but if your hope be in Heaven, *your Conversation*

versation will be Heavenly. Hope is a deep dye that casts a tincture, and leaves its colour in the whole Conversation of a Christian.

He that looks on the world as his Pilgrimage, or place of Travel, will provide only as for a Traveller; But he that looks on the Earth as his dwelling place, will be providing as for an Inhabitant: one Room will suffice a Traveller; but an Inhabitant wanteth a whole house; a few things will suffice a man in his Journey, but an Inhabitant needs a great deal of Furniture; and therefore the Scripture alwayes puts a difference between a man in the World, and a man of the world. *John* 15. *ver.* 19..

By our feet we walk on earth, but by our heart we dwell in heaven.

Application.

1. For Information. To teach us what thoughts we must have of earth and heaven: We must look on the earth

earth as *David* did, to be but the house of his Pilgrimage, *Psalm* 119. *ver.* 54. But we must look on heaven as our Mansion-house, as the Text doth represent it, *a place prepared for us to dwell in for ever*: And what a glorious place must heaven needs be, which the Bridegroom of our Souls hath now been 16 hundred years preparing for his Bride? We must look upon heaven as our home, our Fathers house.

If you ask what ground a Christian hath for this confidence? I answer, the Text telleth us, *Christ is gone thither to prepare a place for them.*

Christ entred into heaven as a common person in the name of his Elect, and so is gone to take possession in their right, as a Guardian takes possession of a house and Land in the right of his Ward; but Christ entred in his own right and ours both, as he is our Guardian.

The

The high-Prieſt under the Law entred into the holy of holies, with the names of the twelve Tribes on his Breſt-plate, to ſhew that he acted there for them whoſe names were there written; Chriſt our great high Prieſt is entred into heaven, whereof the holy of holies was but a Type: thither hath he carryed the names of his Elect, for whom he is to provide Manſions; and therefore Chriſtians are ſaid to have an *Inheritance reſerved in Heaven for them.* 1 *Pet. chap.* 1. *ver.* 4. how ſhould this make us high in our hopes, and lowly in our hearts? heaven is ours in Reverſion; Great hopes, or hopes of great things beget great Spirits, and keep Men from doing any baſe or ſordid things, which are below what they hope for: a Chriſtians hope keeps up his heart, and hinders him from doing any thing unbeſeeming his hope: The Eagle ſcorns to catch at Flies; A Chriſtian

in

is that true Eagle, that ſoareth above theſe petty things below; the hope of Heavenly Manſions ſhould ſhould lift us above the Earth. 2. It ſhould make us lowly in our hearts, not to ſtrive and fight for places here, but to be contented with any place, remembring that while we are in this world we are out of our proper place; Thoſe that are neglectful to look after Heavenly Manſions, are moſt quarrelling for places on Earth; a chriſtian may call all the things of this world *Eſek*, and *Sitnah*, as *Iſaack* named thoſe 2 Wells, about which the *Philiſtines* ſtrove with him, *Gen.* 26.20,21. If God give Houſe or Land to a chriſtian, it doth but make the Men of the world ſtrive with him and hate him for it, as the *Philiſtines* did envy *Iſaack's* Flocks & Herds, *Gen.* 26. 14. But a Chriſtian may call Heaven *Rehoboth*, by the name of *Iſaack's* Well which they ſtrove not for. Now God hath made room for me,

ſays *Iſaack*; a chriſtian hath one place which ugodly men will not ſtrive for; namely Heaven: what an Argument therefore is this, to remove our deſires from earthly Houſes, and to fix them on our Heavenly Manſions? in Earthly Houſes we are always either wanting room, or furniture, or food, or peace in eating it, or aſſurance of continuing, but our Heavenly Manſions have all theſe properties.

Heaven is a good place, for it is of Chriſt's own preparing; Heaven is a large place, there is many Manſions, room enough, and proviſion enough of all things to make a Saint happy. *Abraham's* Servant asked *Rebeckah*, (*is there room in thy Fathers houſe for us to lodge in?* She anſwered, *we have both Straw and Provinder enough, and room to lodge in*, *Gen.* 24 *ver.* 23-25. A Chriſtian need not make ſuch an inquiry concerning Heaven, there is room enough, and proviſion enough.

God

God prepared the world for *Adams* use, before he sent him to be there; God built the House, and ready furnished it, and then raised up Man. God our Redeemer is gone to prepare Heaven, before he carry his Members thither.

Heaven is also a safe place; where God dwelleth there can be no fear of enemies to molest us. *Israel* in the earthly *Canaan* had plenty, but not safety; the *Cananites* continually were invading them; Heaven only is the place of Peace. The Heavenly *Jerusalem* is described to have a great wall, and high, and 12 Gates, and 12 Angels watching at the Gates, and the City to be built upon a great and high Mountain. *Revel.* 20. *ver.* 10--12. Namely, all things that may import safety.

Heaven is too high for danger to climb up to it; it is so immured that there can be no scaling it, the Gates

are

are ſo ſtrong, that there is no breaking them open, and the Watchers ſo watchful that there can be no fear of ſurprize.

And in Heaven alſo is ſuitable company, there we ſhall dwell with God, the Holy Trinity, with Holy Angels, and Saints; here on Earth unſuitable company may make us weary of our Habitations. *Lot* choſe the Plain of *Sodom* to dwell in, but what an uncomfortable place did it prove to that righteous man, by reaſon of the wicked company of thoſe beaſtly *Sodomites*? no doubt had he known their evil manners before, nothing could have tempted him to have thought of dwelling there.

Chriſtians that know and ſee this Earth to be a *Sodom*, muſt not chooſe it for their dwelling place.

Laſtly, Heaven is a place that abideth for ever; Worldly Cities have no firm Foundations, but the wall

Wall of Heaven is described to have twelve Foundations, *Rev.*21. *ver.*14. Earthly Houses may be burned, or beat down either by accident or design, as we see a woful instance in *London*, that City most famed throughout the world; but you know that the World it self is reserved for the general Conflagration: will you make that your Dwelling-place, which you know must be destroyed?

We linger like *Lot*, and are loath to come out of this *Sodom*; but the Lord is merciful by sending us many crosses, pulleth us hence.

This sheweth us further how we come to neglect Heavenly Mansions; We over-value Earthly Tabernacles, and that makes us undervalue heavenly Mansions. Earthly Houses are visible, their Gardens, and Orchards, Parks, and Forrests, Fish-ponds, and Mores, Arbors, and Banquetting-houses; but Heavenly Mansions, and what Provi-

sion

ſion is made there, is only known to Faith, 1. *Cor. chap.* 2. *ver.* 9. as it is written, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred the heart of Man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*; which if it be true of thoſe things prepared in the Goſpel, it is more true of thoſe things prepared in Heaven.

This conſideration of Heavenly Manſions may much quiet and comfort thoſe that either are not born to Houſe and Land, or that are driven from Houſe and home by any ſad Providence; your Tents may be removed, but your Manſions endure for ever.

2. Uſe of Exhortation to all that hope for Heavenly Manſions.

1. Search the Land where you hope to dwell for ever; *Iſrael* ſent ſpies to ſearch for *Canaan*, but their ſpies were of two ſorts: Some brought an evil report on *Canaan*; ſaying, there were Gyants, and yet brought of the good

fruits of the Land; but *Caleb* & *Joshua* told them the truth, *If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this Land*, *Numb.* 14. *ve.* 8. Hearken unto *Caleb* and *Joshua*, unto the faithful spies and true Ministers, which declare from the word of God what place Heaven is, and hearken not unto any that endeavour to bring an evil report on this good Land, where only is *fulness of Joy, and pleasures for evermore*; Indeed there are some difficulties will meet us in our way thither, but no impossibilities; Say with *Caleb*, *the Lord is with us, we are able to overcome them. Numb.* 13. compared with *Num.* 14. *ver.* 9. 2. Pray against earthly mindedness. The young man that seemed so earnest to get to Heaven, as is set out by his postures of running and kneeling, and asking what to do yet his great earthly Possessions hindred him from being prevailed with by the promise of Heavenly treasure

Mar

Mark 10. *ver.* 22. *Reuben* and *Gad* had ſo much Cattle, that they are not eager to dwell in *Canaan*; *Jacob*'s Flocks and Herds made him drive ſlowly homewards, *Gen.* 33. *v.* 14. though I grant his fear of *Eſau* might be a great cauſe alſo.

Thoſe Chriſtians are in moſt danger of neglecting Heavenly Manſions, that are well ſeated in Earthly places, *hæc ſunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, theſe things make us unwilling to die. Let us uſe the Earth as the Birds do, the Air is their proper place, and they care not to deſcend on the Earth but only for their times of Feeding; ſo long as they keep aloft they are ſecure; but when they come to ſettle on the Ground, there are Nets or Guns, or ſome Snare to endanger them: So long as Chriſtians keep their thoughts on Heaven, and the thing above, they are ſafe from Temptation; but when they let them hover too long upon Earth,

and the things below, Satan is ready to shoot at them, or hath one Snare or other to catch them, though your daily Bread grows on Earth, yet look on Heaven as your home, and send your thoughts & desires thither again, that it may appear though you Table here, you expect to dwell in Heaven. A few words more, and then I shall conclude.

1. Be content though God allot you but a low place, or no place in this world, seeing Christ is preparing a place for you in a better world.

2. Get your affections more weaned from earthly Houses (you that have them) and fix your thoughts more on those Heavenly Mansions; Because Children know no better things, they are so much in love with every painted Gew-gaw; It is our ignorance of the Joys in Heaven that makes us so greatly pleased with these toyes on Earth.

3. Be

3. Be not immoderate in grieving for any Relations or Friends departed, (no, though you have had them but a little while with you.)

So long as we are in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; the Apostle *Paul* groaned earnestly in desires of enjoying his Heavenly Mansion, 2 *Cor. chap.* 5. *ver.* 2. and he gives us his Reason in the 1. *ver.* Who would not go out of a thatcht Cottage to inherit a Pallace? those that die in the Lord, do but leave an Earthly Tabernacle, to inherit an Heavenly Kingdom; and will you think it too soon for them to be thus happy? *Solon* being asked who were happy? tells a story of two Youths, who out of affection drew their Mothers Chariot to the Temple, and the Gods to recompence them, caused them to die presently: those are happy that can number Death among their priviledges, and bid it welcom; If I could

offer your Wife or Children, Houſe, or Land, would you ſay, (*no I thank you, I cannot ſpare them yet, they ſhall tarry with me one year longer before they go to poſſeſs it.*) We are wiſer in earthly matters, why are we ſuch fools in Heavenly matters? if we did cordially believe, and ſeriouſly meditate on the bleſſedneſs in Heaven, we ſhould grudge at every hour we tarry on earth, we ſhould think the ſhorteſt life too long, and like the next Heir, be eagerly deſirous to inherit.

I ſay nothing of the party deceaſed (though ſhe hath left a good name behind her) becauſe I was totally a ſtranger to her.

FINIS.

PAUL,

The Pattern of *PARDONING MERCY.*

Being A

SERMON

ON

1 Tim. Chap. 1. Ver. 15.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all Long-suffering for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Benjamin Wheeler

Coitun 2d 1678

3

Eyus Lect

1 Tim. 1. Chap. 16. Ver.

Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long ſuffering for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.

THis Verſe referreth to the laſt words of the former Verſe, (*whereof I am chief; howbeit for this cauſe I obtained mercy;*) as if the Apoſtle would ſay, *Although I was ſo heinous a ſinner, yet Jeſus Chriſt hath made me a pattern of mercy to all others.*

As

As God makes some ſtand as fearful monuments of his wrath to fright thoſe that are impenitent, (like *Lot's* wife turned into a Pillar of Salt to ſeaſon after Ages.) So God is pleaſed to ſet others as Monuments of free-grace to invite all penitent Sinners; the Apoſtle tells us what was Gods aim in pardoning him that was ſo great an offender, to make a pattern of long ſuffering to encourage the greateſt ſinners to lay hold on his Mercy.

For Diviſion of the words,

1. Here is an Act mentioned (*Obtained.*)

2. The thing mentioned, (*Mercy.*)

3. The Perſon mentioned. (*I that needed long ſufferings, I the chief of ſinners.*)

Laſtly, the Reaſon mentioned, (*for this cauſe, that I might be a pattern to them that ſhall hereafter believe,*) that is to ſay, that by my Example the greateſt Sinners might be encouraged to

lay

lay hold on the offer of Free Pardon, seeing such a desperate oppoſer of Jeſus Chriſt as I was, received into favour, that none might hereafter deſpair of Pardon, but all Sinners might be encourag'd to come to God through Jeſus Chriſt.

The Doctrine will be moſt comfortable thus rendred.

That God hath ſet Paul *as a glorious pattern of Mercy, to encourage all ſinners by his Example to ſeek for pardoning Mercy.*

The orderly handling of this Doctrine will be,

1. To ſee what a Pattern is.

2. How *Paul* may be ſaid to be a Pattern?

3. Why *Paul* was made a Pattern?

Laſtly, What excellent encouragement all Sinners hereafter may make of this glorious Pattern of Free-grace?

For the Firſt, What a Pattern is? For on this word ὑποτύπωσις, lyeth the ſtreſs of the whole matter.

A Pattern is, *materia proposita ad imitandum*, something that is laid before our eyes for us to imitate; when a Limner hath drawn some curious Picture in which he thinks he hath shewed much of his Art, he hangs it out for all Passengers to look on, to shew them what he can do; every piece is not fit to be a Pattern, but the most exact Pieces; In the converting of *Paul* (who by his own confession was one of the greatest sinners in the world) God doth shew to all Men in this Pattern, what free Grace can do, how he can pardon the greatest sinners; God hath made *Paul* fit to be a Pattern of pardoning Mercy, to shew all the world how much he can forgive. And this leadeth me to the next particular. How *Paul* might be said to be a Pattern.

1. Consider his own Confession what a kind of Sinner he was, and that will lend some light into this Phrase. 2. Con-

2. Consider the manner of his Conversion.

3. Gods dealing with him after his Conversion.

1. Let us hear his own Confession how great a sinner he was, *chief of sinners*; not only *sensu humilitatis*, so in his own apprehension; nor only *salvandorum primus*, chief sinner of those that shall be saved; but as he was a proud Pharisee that went about to set up his own righteousness in direct opposition to Christs righteousness; Surely, (except the unpardonable sin) there cannot be a greater sin than this; and in this sense Christs words may be understood, that Publicans and Harlots were nearer Heaven, than the self-justifying Pharisees, *Mat.* 21. *ver.* 31. For Publicans and Harlots did not deny that Christs imputed righteousness was the only meriting cause of our Justification; but the Pharisees denyed this.

The

The Apostle confesseth how exceeding mad he was against this Doctrine so long as he was a Pharisee, and persecuted all that professed to be justifyed by Faith in Jesus Christ, *Acts.26.* from *ver.9.* to *ver.12.* He would not yield to cast away the thoughts of his own righteousness, and to relie upon the righteousness of Christ imputed; and this made him persecute unto the death all such as professed a contrary way of being justified; and herein he was a greater sinner, than if he had been a Thief, or Drunkard, or any other kind of sinner, those are trespasses against the commands of the Law, but this is the highest Trespass against the great Command of the Gospel; namely, that we should embrace Christ as he is called, *the Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. ver. 6.* There is more hopes of Publicans and Harlots, of Theeves and Murderers, than of those that reject Christs imputed Righteousness,

except

except the Devils & Damned in Hell; Christ can have no greater enemies, than those that cry up their own righteousness, and cry down the Doctrine of his imputed Righteousness. *Paul* before Conversion, was tooth & nail, as we say, against this Doctrine; so that we may see a most elaborate piece of the work of free Grace, (ὑποτύπωσις, may be derived from τύπτω,) saith *Passor, nota incisa, insculpta, percussione, vel pulsatione facta.* The Character of Free Grace is deeply cut in this Pattern; *Paul*, a proud Pharisee, was beaten down to the ground; and he that before so hotly persecuted the name of Christ, is now made a Preacher of it; here is now the depth of humility, where there was the height of Pride before; Here God hath wrought a curious frame out of a rugged knotty piece of timber. Here is a Lion-like nature changed into a Lamb; he that before was σαῦλος, from σαλος, *inter-*

posito

posito v,) that is to say, unquiet like the Sea, and turbulent, is now *Paul*, quiet and peaceable; see what Free Grace can do: here is a rare Pattern indeed!

For a Physician perfectly to cure one that is stark mad, and bring him to his right mind, this shews great skill indeed: this God hath done; *Paul* was exceeding mad, persecuting all whersoever he met them, that professed to be justifyed by Faith in Christs Righteousness; and yet the Grace of God hath perfectly cured him, and now makes him to seek to Christ for Righteousness, and count his own Righteousness but dung, and to preach the same way of Justification to others. If a Chyrurgeon go into an Hospital, and pick out those that are most desperately sick & lame, and cure them; is it not the greater argument of his skill? so here in *Paul*'s Conversion and Pardon; God doth

shew

ſhew what Free Grace can do; for *Paul* is perfectly cured, that was moſt deſperately ſick of Pride and Self-love.

2. Conſider the manner of his Converſion, and then his name *Paul* may be derived from the Hebrew word פלא, which ſignifies Wonderful, for the manner of his Converſion was wonderful indeed, recorded, *Acts 9. ver.* 1. *while he was yet breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the Church*, he made himſelf acceſſory to the murder of *Stephen*, by holding the Garments of them that ſtoned him, *Acts* 8. *ver.* 58. But this did whet his malice, and ſharpen his rage the more, this did but fleſh his Fury, and make him more eager to perſecute; this was but a younger practice, to what he afterwards intended; He ſeeks to get a Commiſſion to impower him to perſecute all that came in his way; and being armed with authority, and come

nigh to *Damascus*, (which was the end of his journey,) God surprized him suddenly, and turned a proud *Saul* into an humble *Paul*, and made him a zealous Preacher of Christ, who came thither out of a design to shew himself a bitter Persecutor of that name; He that was prancing on Horse-back before, is now fallen to the Earth; He that came to punish Christs Disciples, now owneth Christ as his Lord, and begs now to know what he will have him do, *Acts* 9. *ver.* 14. He that was raging before, is trembling and astonished now; A little light from Heaven, will tame the most furious Persecutor, any discovery either of the glorious Majesty of Jesus Christ, or of our vileness, will humble any sinner; see here the irresistible power of Grace, that can meet with a Wolf seeking for his Prey, and can suddenly change him into a harmless Lamb

3. Consid

3. Consider how graciously God dealt with him after Conversion, in imploying him as a Prime Officer in the Church of Christ; yea, as a Master-builder, and as a chief Pillar of that Church which he fought before to pull down. God sent him as an honorable Embassador to bear Christs name before Kings, and the Children of *Israel*, whose great ambition before was to be the Saints common Executioner: Christ intended that *Paul* should suffer much for his name, who came to *Damascus* to make all them suffer that professed Christs name.

It is remarkable, that of all the Apostles, *Paul* only was wrapt up in the third Heaven; God dealt so graciously with him, that he that was the greatest enemy to Christ before his Conversion, is now used as the most indeared friend of Christ after his conversion, and hath the most glorious discoveries of Christ, and of the My-

ſteries of his Goſpel of all others, and now his name may be called Wonderful indeed; for here is a Scene on which before Converſion, corrupt Nature acted her outragious Fury; and after converſion, ſanctifying Grace ſhewed her ſacred force, and both to ſuch an extent, as few Stories can parallel. In *Saul* was ſeen as much as can well be in a Man void of Grace; and in *Paul* was diſcovered as much as need be looked for in the moſt eminent Saint; his former madneſs is equalled by his preſent zeal, and now all that *Jewiſh* Learning which he had raked together, intending onely thereby to defend the righteouſneſs of the Law, and the Traditions of the Elders, and to diſpute againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel; God imploys it better, to make him more able to confound the *Jews*, and to prove that Jeſus is the very Chriſt, *Acts 9. ver.* 22.

None

None preach Christ crucifyed so plainly, and the Doctrine of Justification by Christs imputed Righteousness so powerfully, and so thorowly as *Paul* does; none beat so much on this string, as he, *Romans* 3. *ver.* 27. *Galat.* 2. *ver.* 16. and in *Galat.* 3. *ver.* 10. None cry down the Righteousness of the Law so vehemently, nor cry up the imputed Righteousness of Christ so earnestly as *Paul* does: thus as he was behind no man in wickedness before his conversion; so was he not inferior to the very chief Apostles after conversion, but laboured more abundantly than they all, 1 *Cor. chap.* 15. *ver.* 10. Now he would preach nothing but Christ crucifyed, 1 *Cor. chap.* 2. *ver.* and would glory in nothing, but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus, *Gal.* 6. *ver.* 14. Thus *Paul* was even a miracle of Mercy, and a glorious pattern of Grace.

The next particular is, why *Paul* was hung out as a pattern of Free grace?

1. Becauſe he had been ſuch a notorious perſecuter; and therefore as the noiſe of his mad and ignorant zeal had filled the world before, ſo now the news of his converſion would be the more wonderful, and he would be the more fit to be a pattern, becauſe the Example of ſo great a Sinner, would be more encouragement for other ſinners to ſeek for Mercy, *Galat.* 1. *ver.* 23, 24. When the Churches heard that *Paul* preached the Faith which he once deſtroyed, they glorifyed God in him. When ſinners remember that *Paul* was pardoned, they may glorify Gods Mercy by ſeeking Pardon too.

2. *Paul* was made a Pattern of Free Grace, becauſe he was an eminent *Jew*, and by Sect, a *Phariſee*, and ſo might prove a leading Pattern to all the

the *Jews*, and to that obstinat Sect of the *Pharisees*, to leave off persecuting the Church of Christ, and to joyn themselves unto it, to follow his Example in renouncing the Righteousness of Works, and embracing the Righteousness of Faith: *Paul* was well read in all their Jewish Traditions, and was as zealous of them as they, and therefore they might see more of the power of Grace in his conversion, that now made him hazard his own life to advance that way, which before he persecuted unto Death.

3. *Paul* was chose to be a Pattern, because in such a Pattern the freeness of Grace would appear more clearly, here all the world may see, that we are not saved out of any Works foreseen; here was nothing to fit him to receive Grace (unless making havock of the Church be a preparatory work) Such Works the *Romish* Saints are full of; here was a raging Persecutor tamed and pardoned. It

It is not our Faith apprehending Christ that saves us, but our Christ apprehended by Faith; Christ is the meriting cause, and Faith is the Instrumental.

Lastly, *Paul* was set as a Pattern of Free Grace, to encourage other sinners beholding the Mercy of God unto him to look after Mercy too, that as in a Glass or Mirrour, all men may see more clearly the freeness of Grace, it is a good means to prevent our despair when we see such an instance of pardoning Mercy before our eyes; and this leadeth me to the last particular: What encouragement may other sinners draw from this great pattern of *Paul*'s obtaining Pardon. My meaning is not, that others should expect to be miraculously converted, as *Paul* was; (for you may as well expect to be caught up into the third Heaven:) But by *Paul*'s being pardoned, you may look after a Pardon: *Paul* believed,

lieved, and was obedient to the voice from Heaven, and ſo obtained Mercy. This voice from Heaven was the voice of Chriſt, *why perſecuteſt thou me?* and *Acts 9. ver. 5. I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.*

The Goſpel now is Chriſts voice from Heaven, he that believeth this voice, and is obedient to it, ſhall as ſurely obtain Pardon as ever *Paul* did; and he that will not obey Chriſts voice in the Goſpel, ſhall never be pardoned. * It is remarkable, that Chriſt did not tell *Paul* by the voice from Heaven, what he ſhould do, but ſent him to be taught by *Ananias*, who was a Miniſter of the Goſpel, *Acts 9. ver. 6.* So now he doth not miraculouſly tell ſinners what they muſt do to be ſaved, but ſends them to his Word and Miniſters to be inſtructed; and therefore pray compare thoſe two places together, *Hebr. 4 ver. 7. To day if you will hear his voice:*

what

what is that voice of Christ? *Luk.* 10. *ver.* 16, *He that heareth you, heareth me.* Christ spake this to his Seventy Disciples when he sent them out to preach the Gospel; Christ gives his Ministers the same power to preach, as he did them, though he hath not given them power to work Miracles: he still says, *He that heareth you heareth me*; for it is Christs word, and not Ministers to return to the queston, how other sinners may draw encouragement from *Pauls* obtaining Mercy? Why this this a pattern for other sinners, (*ad imitandum Pauli fidem*) to believe, and so they shall obtain mercy. When you see a very deformed person well married, you are apt to say, *nay, then, none need ever hereafter despair of a husband*; other sinners may say so from this pattern of Free Grace, seeing that *Paul* the chief of sinners is married to Jesus Christ; seeing so great a sinner is pardoned, no sinner hereafter

after need deſpair of pardon; thus one Begger encourageth another, by telling them, or ſhewing them what a good Alms they have gotten; *I ſped well at ſuch a door* and this encourageth others to go thither too.

Though indeed begging is now grown ſuch a common Trade, that you may be ſoon wearied out with Beggers; ſuch is mans emptineſs, that he cannot be always giving; but ſuch is Gods fulneſs, that he delights to be dealing of his dole of Mercy; the oftner you come to the door of Mercy, the better you ſhall ſpeed, and therefore this is an encouraging Pattern: And conſider beloved, how great is Gods goodneſs in giving us ſuch Patterns to invite us to the throne of Grace?

To ſee *Matthew* and *Zaccheus*, two Publicans pardoned, may encourage all Publicans to look after Pardon too; to ſee *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom went

went seven Devils; and the Woman taken in the very act of Adultery, both pardoned, may encourage all sinners to seek pardon; to hear *Paul* say, *I was a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained Mercy*, may greatly encourage all sinners to follow God by Prayer for to shew them Mercy; it is a very great mercy that we have not only Promises of Pardon, but also Patterns of notorious sinners that have been pardoned.

1. Because such Patterns sufficiently declare the infinite merit of Christs death: who could be fitter Trumpets of Christs Power and Mercie, then those blind, and lame, and leprous, and the Woman cured of her bloody Issue, and that other Woman bowed together; all which Christ cured in the days of his Flesh?

When the Jews spake against Christ, the man whom he had restor'd to sight pleaded hard for him, *John* 9. *ver.* 30.

33. *If this man were not of God he could do nothing* : The Jews knew not what to object, but proudly asked him, *Dost thou undertake to teach us, ver.* 34?

What can any poor ſinner object againſt the Power & Mercy of Chriſt, when they ſee ten Lepers cleanſed at once? but may be enforced to cry out with that Leper, *Matt.* 8. *ver.* 2. *Lord if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean* : He that cured Ten, can cure ten Millions; though it is not ſo with bodily Phyſicians, their Art is fallible, but Chriſt is the infallible Phyſician.

To hear that Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, may not move us ſo much as to ſee it in the Examples of *Manaſſeh*, and the Theef on the Croſs, and thoſe others before-mentioned; ſuch remarkable inſtances do abundantly declare, that the merit of Chriſts death is exceedingly beyond the demerit of our ſins; Chriſts healing all manner

of

of diſeaſed that were brought unto him, ſhews that he can heal all manner of diſeaſed Souls that come unto him now.

2. Such Inſtances do evince, that God is ready to deal out Pardons to all ſorts of Sinners, let their Sins be what they will, that come in Chriſts name to ask Pardon; the poor Soul is apt to ſay, How ſhall I know that God will pardon ſuch a wretched ſinner as I am? Why you may believe it in ſuch Patterns as *Paul*, and thoſe beſore mentioned.

3. It is a great Mercy to have ſuch Patterns of pardoning Mercy; for in theſe we may more clearly ſee what is the great deſign of free Grace? namely to ſet open the door of Mercy, and invite all ſinners to come freely, and to give pardons to all that will come to God in Chriſts name: And therefore *Peter* and *Paul* the two greateſt Apoſtles and Pillars of the Church, are

are both set as Patterns of Free Grace, to encourage other sinners to look after Pardon; *Peter* denyed, yea abjured his Saviour, and yet was pardoned. *Paul* persecuted him, and blasphemed his name, and compelled others to do so to, and yet was pardoned: Now as some prophane wretches in *Salvians* time did presume to sin, because *David*, and *Noah*, and *Lot* sinned, *Si* David, *cur non & ego*; *si* Noah, *si* Lot, *cur non & ego?* Here the poor penitents may turn their presumption into a blessed hope, and say with an humble confidence, *si* Petrus *cur non & ego? si* Paulus, *cur non & ego? si* David, *si* Noah, *si* Lot, *cur non & ego?* If all these were pardoned, why may not I follow God for pardon?

Gods gracious design in suffering such Examples to be Registred of notorious sinners that were pardoned, is, that by such presidents of Mercy, all other sinners might take encouragement

ment to ſeek for Mercy in ſuch marvailous examles as theſe, Satans greateſt Objection is anſwered to our hands.

What doth ſuch a wicked creature as you hope for pardon? in ſuch patterns of Mercy, as *Manaſſeh*, *Peter*, *Paul*, and the like. God teacheth us how to anſwer the Devil: God hath pardoned as great ſinners as I am, and therefore I am ſure God can pardon me, and I believe God will pardon all that ſeek to him in Chriſt for pardon; and therefore I will ply the Throne of Grace in Chriſts name to beg pardon; In ſuch patterns God doth as it were make a ſhew of his Mercy, that we may ſee no ſins are ſo great but they ſhall be pardoned, if we do not add Unbelief unto them. Mr. *Lightfoot* hath an excellent note to this purpoſe on *Pauls* converſion The moſt notorious perſecuter that the Goſpel had yet found, is choſen of all others to be

the

the Doctor of the Gentiles, that even his own example, or rather the glorious example of Gods Mercy in his converſion, might be a comfortable Doctrine to thoſe notorious ſinners of the Gentiles, as well as his Preaching.

Laſtly, it is a great Mercy to have ſuch Patterns of pardoning Mercy, becauſe ſuch inſtances are a good means to keep all ſinners from deſpair; your caſe is not deſperate if the Counſellour can ſhew you a Preſident of the like: If the Phyſician can ſhew you many now living whom he hath recovered of the ſame diſtemper, this may be a good encouragement for you to hope for a cure too: This is *Paul's* meaning when he calls himſelf *chief of ſinners*, and ſays, *that he obtained Mercy for this cauſe, that he might be a pattern to others*; as much as to ſay, *In me God ſhews as from an high Tower, that all ſinners may be pardoned as I was, if they ſeek to him in Chriſts name as I*

did; and as *David* ſaid, *they that fear thee, will be glad when they ſee me, Pſal.* 119. *ver.* 24. it may be turned here, they that ſee *David* pardoned, and *Paul* pardoned, they may be glad of ſuch encouraging patterns to make them hope for pardon too; the Doctrine of free Grace is the only Doctrine to invite guilty ſinners, if pardon be offered freely to all that will come to God in Chriſt: Then if I go to pray to God for pardon in the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, I ſhall be pardoned as well as they; and this conſideration moves the poor ſinner to go to the throne of grace to beg pardon.

God who hath no reſpect of perſons, can have no motive from within, but his own free love, to pardon a poor ſinner; and the word *Sinner*, ſufficiently declares that there can be no motive from without; therefore, the ſame Free Grace that hath pardoned other ſinners, will pardon all ſinners

ners that seek pardon; Yea, this is a good sign that God intends to pardon us, when he makes us with *David* pray earnestly to be pardoned.

Application, is for Exhortation, to press all sinners to draw that encouragement from this glorious pattern of *Paul*'s obtaining Mercy, which God intends us; *Why do we sit still*, as the Lepers said one to another, 2 *Kings chap. 7. ver.* 3. Why do not we pray for pardon?

There are three things which God doth most delight to glorify, his name, his Son, his Covenant, and then we most glorify these three things when we look after pardon. As for Gods Name, he tells us plain enough, *Jer.* 33. *ver.* 8, 9. *That he would exalt his Name before all Nations of the Earth by pardoning his People* Israel; therefore let us urge God with his own words, *Lord glorifie thy name of Mercy in pardoning my sins*, that all the world may be

enforced to say in those words, *Micah 7. ver.* 18. *who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity*, &c.

Concerning his Son, God therefore named him *Jesus*, that all the world might hear by that very name, that he was sent to be a Saviour; thus *Paul* told the Jews, *Acts* 5. *ver.* 30, 31. That Jesus whom they hanged on a Tree, God had exalted to be their Saviour, to give Repentance to *Israel*, and forgiveness of Sins.

And concerning the Covenant, You know it is called, *the Covenant of Grace*; Pardon of Sin is the great promise of the Covenant of Grace, *Jer.* 31. *ver.* 34. last words, *for I will forgive their Iniquity, and remember their Sin no more*, then we glorify Gods name of Mercy, and Christs name as a Saviour, and the name of the Covenant of Grace, when we are moved by these to pray for pardoning mercy; remember now is the day of Grace; that

that is to say, Now God is ready to give us Pardon, if we seek pardoning Grace: Heaven is said to have twelve Gates, *Rev.* 21. *ver.* 12. intimating to us, that now there is free admission every way, to all sinners that come to the Throne of Grace; But there is a day of Judgement coming, then God will as much delight to glorifie his Justice in damning all those that refused to seek for Pardon in the day of Grace.

There are Twelve Steps that lead a sinner to the hope of Pardon.

1. To see his absolute need of Pardon.

2. To set a possibility of Pardon; for we can have no hope of that we judge impossible; he sees it possible by the glorious Patterns of such as have been pardoned.

3. To desire a Pardon.

4. To admire the freeness of Grace in all such as have obtained Mercy.

5. To see that the only way of obtaining Mercy, is, to believe in the Lord Jesus.

6. To see Christs ability to pardon, and to begin to seek after him.

7. To read and eye the promises of Pardon.

8. To believe the truth of those Promises.

9. To desire to have an Interest in those Promises.

10. To venture our Souls on the free offer of Pardon.

11. To follow God by Prayer in the name of Christ to pardon us.

Lastly, Now the sinner arriveth at the Cape of good Hope, and a good Hope is the beginning of assurance.

When the poor sinner looks towards Christ, then it begins to hope for Pardon.

No matter what the Disease was, if the party had but Faith to be healed, as is said of the Man lame in his Feet, *Acts* 14. *ver.* 9. No

No matter what our ſins are, if we have but Faith to believe in Chriſt for Pardon. Phyſicians care not for medling in dangerous caſes; but ſuch deſperate caſes bring more glory to Jeſus Chriſt; thus curing him that had been thirty eight years impotent, *Joh.* 5. to *ver.* 8. and healing her that had ſpent all upon Phyſicians, *Mark* 5. *ver.* 25, 26. and raiſing *Lazarus* that had been dead fourdays, *Ioh.* 11. 39. working through theſe natural impoſſibilities, made Chriſts power be more admired by all that ſaw his Miracles: even ſo this high pattern of *Paul* a Perſecuter, and a Blaſphemer, and one of the chief of ſinners; and yet obtaining Mercy, doth much more advance the riches of free Grace, and may be a greater encouragemrnt to all that hear of it to ſeek after pardoning Mercy; no matter how deſperate our caſe ſeem to us, if we make uſe of Chriſt as our Phyſician.

God

God hath set us two great Patterns in *Peter* and *Paul*, both great sinners, yet both obtaining pardoning Mercy. The Lord giye us his grace, that we may imitate *Peter's* sincere Repentance, and *Paul's* saving Faith, that we may also obtain Mercy, through Christ Jesus that came to save sinners.

John John J John
A J

Robert Tucker
his Book

FINIS.

March 22 1733-4